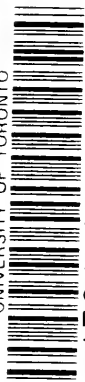


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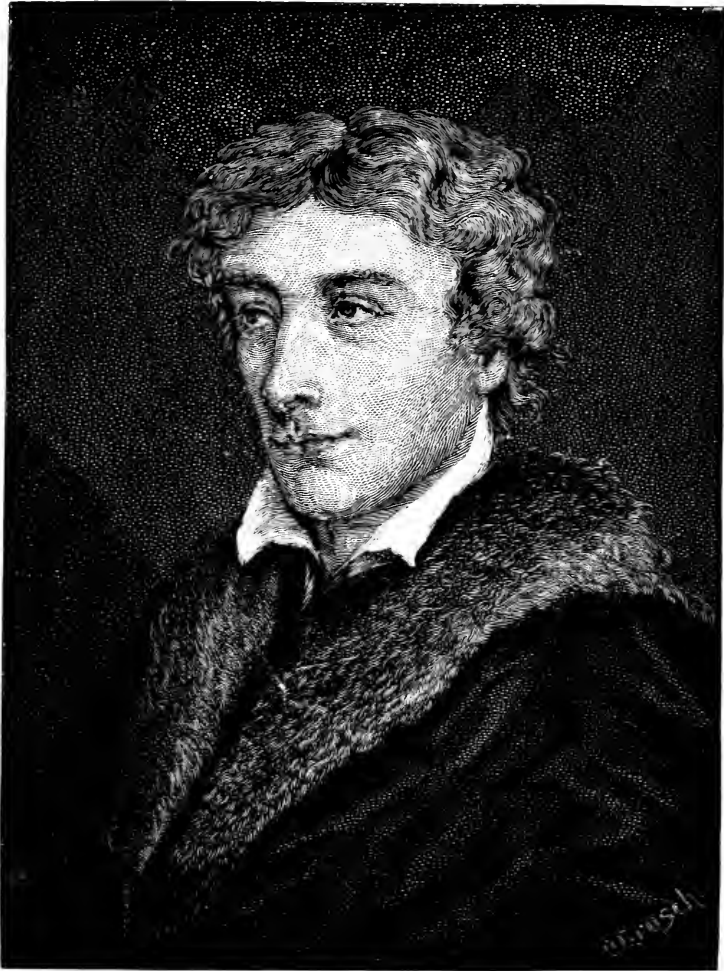


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THE ATHENÆUM PRESS SERIES

G. L. KITTREDGE AND C. T. WINCHESTER

GENERAL EDITORS



JOHN KEATS.

257B2

Athenæum Press Series

POEMS BY JOHN KEATS

*"What more felicity can fall to creature,
Than to enjoy delight with liberty!"*

Fate of the Butterfly. — SPENSER.

EDITED, WITH INTRODUCTION AND NOTES

BY

ARLO BATES

184568.

12.10.23



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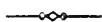
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PREFACE.



IN the making up of this volume certain liberties have been taken which may seem to call for a word of explanation. The common arrangement of the poems has been discarded, and spelling and punctuation have been to some extent modified. Hitherto the poems have usually been printed according to the contents of the three volumes published in Keats's lifetime, the posthumous work following in the order which has seemed good in the eyes of particular editors. The only conceivable objections to a departure from this plan are that it had in parts the sanction of the author and that it is impossible to know how Keats would have arranged the poems had he lived to edit a complete edition. On the other hand it is evident that he could not have retained an order so ineffective and so little calculated to give to the general reader a just impression. There is much in the first volume—especially the Epistles—which is of little value save to the special student of the development of Keats's genius, and equally there is among the posthumous work a good deal which the poet would probably never have printed. It does not seem to me that one shows intelligent admiration for a poet by dragging forward all the experiments in verse by which the bard learned his technique; and I have ventured to omit certain verse which I feel entire

confidence Keats himself would have dropped had he lived to reprint. This at once made necessary the rearrangement which in any case I should have made in order that the emphasis of place in the volume should fall upon the worthiest work. Under the old plan of putting first the contents of the 1817 volume, the reader's first impression came entirely from the earliest and crudest work. This was manifestly unfair alike to reader and to poet ; and I venture to believe that the order in the present volume is one which more nearly does justice to the poems than that before adopted.

The question of spelling and punctuation has been a most teasing one. Keats was by no means accurate in his orthography, and he did not live to outgrow a certain boyish extravagance in his feeling for the picturesque effect of antique spellings. The associations called up in his mind by the sight of words spelled as they had been by Elizabethan poets were so delightful that he forgot that to the average reader such orthographies would seem not picturesque but simply illiterate. He introduced confusion, moreover, by a constant want of uniformity. 'Lilly' on one page is 'lily' on the next, and so on for a long list of words which the curious may find in Forman's exhaustive edition. Editors have struggled with Keats's confused and confusing orthography with various results. It seemed the simplest and wisest course in an edition meant for the student and the general reader to adopt as far as possible the ordinary modern spelling throughout. I recognize the fact that this involves a loss, for I appreciate fully the value of an appeal to the eye by the form of a word. On the whole, however,

the loss seems to be outweighed by the gain in the avoidance of confusion and of the danger of a flavor of illiteracy, and he who objects to this innovation is respectfully recommended to examine carefully the orthography of the Keats texts before pronouncing final judgment.

The matter of punctuation has been more difficult still, since an experienced writer means a point as definitely as he means a word. With Keats, however, a point is frequently rather a confession of confusion than the expression of a conviction. He was not infrequently in evident doubt in regard to what punctuation he did mean. I have meddled as little as possible with his punctuation, but even in cases where Keats read the proof-sheets I have not been constrained by a superstitious reverence for obvious and confusing errors simply because they were his.

The whole question is whether an editor is to be bound slavishly to the letter or is within proper limits to insist upon the freedom of the spirit. I believe deeply in treating the work of the masters with reverence ; but I believe also that the truest reverence is shown when devotion is guided by common sense.

A. B.

JUNE, 1895.



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INTRODUCTION.



I

GENIUS and death have conferred upon John Keats a double immortality. Forever he remains young, as forever his song is full of melody. The rich sweetness of his verse touches the more surely because behind it lies the pathos of that early grave ; and among all the writers of the century there is probably none who has excited deeper feelings of admiration and sympathy. He is, too, one of the most difficult of poets to discuss. The overflowing beauty of the work he did inevitably provokes the question : What might he have done ? Every critic must have felt how hard it is to judge the poetry of Keats without reference to what might have followed it had he lived. It is obvious, however, that it is idle to speculate upon what might have been ; and that what was written must be regarded not as part of a life-work uncompleted, but as a whole in and of itself. Taken as it is and for what it is, it is abundantly able to stand alone ; it is sufficiently beautiful and sufficiently important to hold readers by its charm as long as English poetry endures, and to secure for the poet an unchallenged place among the immortals, even were all pathos and personal feeling entirely faded and forgotten.

II

The parents of Keats were not such as would have seemed likely to be the ancestors of a genius. The father was an assistant in a livery-stable, and had married the daughter of

his employer. He seems to have been a respectable, sensible man, of instincts more refined than are usually found in his station. The mother's character has not been very clearly set forth. She is said to have been of disposition somewhat saturnine, and fond of amusements. The latter trait is of immediate interest from the fact that it is supposed to have led to some imprudence which resulted in the premature entrance into the world of her eldest son. The child was born at Moorfields, London, on October 29 or 31, 1795, and was christened John.

Three other children were born to Mr. and Mrs. Keats, two boys, George and Thomas, and a daughter, Fanny. The father was killed by a fall from his horse in 1804, and the mother died of consumption in 1810. John was strongly attached to his mother, and felt her death keenly. His nature, too, was not one to be lightly consoled, although he was outwardly of a disposition rather joyous than melancholy.

The boy had been early put to school at Enfield, under a Mr. Clarke, who is best remembered as the schoolmaster of Keats and the father of Charles Cowden Clarke, the Shakespearean scholar. Here he received a fair rudimentary education, including some knowledge of Latin. Greek he never knew. He seems to have been well liked by his fellows, and between him and the son of the master sprang up a friendship which lasted through the short life of the poet. Keats as a schoolboy was a manly, passionate, pugnacious lad, of quick and lively temperament, and though of rather small stature, of much personal beauty of face and figure. The maternal grandfather had left a moderate fortune to the Keats children, which was not too well managed by the trustees. A considerable portion of John's share was expended upon his education. He was taken from school at fifteen, and apprenticed for five years to a

11
ROSE
OOMY

surgeon, although for some reason not clear he did not complete this term. He then went into the London hospitals, and reached the point of being able to operate successfully.

While his education had been progressing, however, the poetic strain had shown itself in the young man. He was not precociously literary. The reading of Spenser when he was sixteen or seventeen seems to have awakened in him the passion till then latent, and for the rest of his life poetry was to him a prime necessity of existence. It was not until a couple of years later¹ that he ventured to show to Clarke his own attempts at rhyming; but he composed more and more, and more and more the love of poetic composition grew upon him. "The other day, during the lecture," he once said to Clarke, "there came a sunbeam into the room, and with it a whole troop of creatures floating in the ray; and I was off with them to Oberon and fairyland." The combined result of his inclination toward literature and of the sensitiveness which made surgery intolerable to him was that in the winter of 1816-17 Keats formed definitely the determination to devote his life to poetry.

Keats had in the meantime through Clarke made that acquaintance with Leigh Hunt and his coterie which was to influence so strongly his work and his fate. Leigh Hunt was an amiable, attractive, superficially accomplished creature; an engaging dilettante in politics, in literature, and in life. He was staunch in his friendships and appreciative of the work of others in an entirely unenvious fashion. He edited with his brother a paper called the *Examiner*, in which political matters were discussed with more emotion than profundity, but which had at least the merit of fearless frankness. An attack upon the Prince Regent, which was

¹ There is more or less confusion of the authorities in regard to these dates, but the matter is not of importance which warrants going into it minutely.

distinguished as much by violence as it was for truth, procured for Hunt the penalties of fine and imprisonment; and it is hardly too much to say that he made more reputation out of his imprisonment than out of his talents.

Keats was greatly influenced by Hunt, whose authority in matters literary and æsthetic the young man not unnaturally exaggerated; and perhaps this influence was not on the whole other than beneficial. The range of Hunt was never a wide one, but he held to worthy traditions, and it was of no little importance that Keats was brought into an atmosphere essentially and avowedly intellectual. The direct literary influence of Hunt, Keats lived long enough almost entirely to outgrow; while the indirect effects in the stimulation of a passion for poetry and a respect for classic models must have been of value however long the poet had lived.

The outward effect of this association with the coterie scornfully dubbed by *Blackwood's* the "Cockney School" was disastrous. It brought upon the head of Keats the wrath of the Tory reviewers, at a time when criticism was more a matter of politics than of literature and when decencies of expression were as little regarded as were canons of art. Keats wrote a sonnet to Hunt on the latter's release from his political imprisonment, and dedicated to him his first volume of poems. This first volume, issued in 1817, was too insignificant to attract even abuse, despite the fact that it contained the superb *Chapman's Homer* sonnet; but when *Endymion* appeared in the year following, Keats was made to pay for his loyalty to a man who had braved Tory opinion and who passed — if not posed — as a martyr of Tory oppression.

The first volume contained not much of note beyond the sonnet just mentioned, *I Stood Tiptoe upon a Little Hill*, and *Sleep and Poetry*. There were epistles to Keats's brothers, to Clarke and other friends, with a set of feeble verses to some

ladies who had sent the poet a shell; and there were a number of sonnets, for the most part of rather indifferent merit. The epistles showed most plainly the influence of Hunt in their tendency to familiar and colloquial commonplaces and occasionally to clumsy jocoseness; but even at this early stage of his art life, the instincts of Keats's own genius were too true for him to fall deeply into these errors.

No sooner was this first volume launched than Keats began upon *Endymion*. His health was already causing his friends anxiety, and at their advice he went to the Isle of Wight. This he found too lonely, and soon left for Margate and Canterbury; thence he went to Hampstead, where he passed the summer. It was at this time that he said in one of his letters:

"I find I cannot do without poetry—without eternal poetry; half the day will not do—the whole of it. I began with a little, but habit has made me a leviathan. . . . I shall forthwith begin my *Endymion*."

It is said that he had agreed with Shelley, whom he had met at Hunt's, that each should write a poem within six months. Shelley wrote *The Revolt of Islam* by way of keeping this compact, while Keats produced *Endymion*. The poem was begun in April, 1817, and finished in first draft in the November following. The opening book was ready for the printer in January. The story of the loves of Diana and her shepherd had long been in Keats's mind, and in *I Stood Tiptoe upon a Little Hill* he had already shown the vivid impression made upon him by the legend which he now used. As has been said, he did not read Greek, and he therefore was forced to trust for inspiration and material not to original classic sources but to classical dictionaries and his own invention. To the ancient myth he owed little beyond the central idea of the passion of the goddess for a mortal. With

this he interwove according to his fancy fragments of other Grecian myths and incidents of his own devising, the result being a web of mingled obvious faults and exquisite beauties.

The weaknesses of the work were sufficiently numerous and evident to give bitter point and force to the virulent attacks with which *Endymion* was met by the Tory press. Keats now paid in full for his association with Leigh Hunt and the "Cockney School." *Blackwood's Magazine* and the *Quarterly Review* assailed the book with so much venom that for many years it was generally believed that the criticism in the latter killed Keats. This was long ago disproved. It is known now that the poet was death-doomed by hereditary disease before *Endymion* saw the light, and that, so far from being crushed by the reviews, he received them with rare good sense and manliness; but the theory that the *Quarterly* killed him will always be remembered from its vigorous enshrinement by Shelley in *Adonais*.

The swiftness of the poetic development of the young singer is indicated by the effect of *Endymion* upon him, and by his own attitude toward the book. He wrote it with eagerness, and yet by the time it was finished he had already outgrown it. In the preface he says in effect that while he perceives the defects of the work, he has already passed so completely beyond it that he cannot rewrite. "I am anxious," he wrote while the book was in the press, "to get *Endymion* printed, that I may forget it and proceed."

In the preface to *Endymion* Keats announced his intention of trying one more Grecian story, and in the following December he began *Hyperion*. The majestic dignity of the opening passage is in itself a sufficient proof of the amazing rapidity of his poetic growth. He worked at the epic at intervals for nearly a year, but in the end wisely abandoned it, convinced of the impossibility of reviving with true vitality the story of the early gods.

Domestic troubles were meanwhile thickening about the poet. His affection for his family was intense, as indeed were all his feelings; and from this he was destined to receive more of sorrow than of joy. The guardian of his sister Fanny, regarding the poet with the outraged propriety of the British Philistine who has seen a respectable profession thrust aside to give place for so doubtful an occupation as verse-making, discouraged if he did not actually endeavor to prevent all intimacy between his ward and her brother. George, the second of the Keats children, married and emigrated to America in the spring of 1818. The third brother, Tom, whom John loved very tenderly, was dying of consumption; and the poet was undoubtedly weakened by the devotion with which he nursed the invalid. The death of Tom in the autumn of 1818 was a blow so terrible that its effects were not to be shaken off, coming as it did at a time when disease, loneliness, and discouragement had lessened Keats's vitality and weakened his power of resistance.

It might have seemed, indeed, that there was consolation in the fact that during this same autumn Keats became engaged to Miss Fanny Brawne, for whom he conceived a passion which was characteristic of his ardent nature; but in the event there proved to be for him in this love more of torment than of joy. Through the melancholy weeks of his rapidly increasing illness in the year following, he wrote to her a series of letters marked with mad love, despairing desire, ever increasing misery, and morbid frenzy born of the passionate consciousness that the bony fingers of death were already clutching his wrist to lead him away from all his ambitions and from his love. The publication of these letters in our own day by those who profess to admire the genius and to cherish the memory of Keats was an outrage incomparably greater than any attack made upon the poet in his lifetime by hostile reviewers. They prove, however,

how much more of anguish than of bliss came to him through this passion.

In this year, 1818, besides the beginning of *Hyperion*, *Isabella* and the *Eve of St. Agnes* were written. *Lamia* and the great odes belong to the year following. Keats also produced with his friend, Charles Armitage Brown, a blank-verse tragedy, called *Otho the Great*, Brown furnishing the story and Keats the verse. There was at one time a prospect that this might be acted, and Keats, hoping to find in dramatic literature a means of livelihood, began alone a tragedy on the life of King Stephen, which he soon abandoned unfinished.

In the autumn of 1819 Keats took lodgings in London, declaring his intention of writing for the periodicals for support. His means were nearly exhausted, his health was steadily failing, and he was worn out alike by the sense of the desperate struggle in which his life was involved and by a burning desire to regain strength and means which would allow him to marry. He attempted a recast of *Hyperion*, but with a result so little satisfactory that for a long time the later version was believed to be an earlier attempt than the original. He also wrote part of what was to be a comic fairy poem, somewhat in the style of Ariosto. It was called *Cap and Bells; or, Jealousies*, and was to be published over the name Lucy Vaughn Lloyd. There are a few scattered touches of the real Keats in it, but on the whole perhaps nothing more need be said of it than that it is better forgotten as the unworthy product of a brain sick and distraught.

In February Keats received a chill by riding on the outside of a stage-coach, and this was followed by a hemorrhage. The incident, as told by his friend Brown, is movingly pathetic.

"I entered his chamber as he leapt into bed. On entering the cold sheets, before his head was on the pillow, he slightly coughed,

and I heard him say, 'That is blood from my mouth.' I went toward him ; he was examining a single drop of blood upon the sheet. 'Bring me the candle, Brown, and let me see this blood.' After regarding it steadfastly, he looked up in my face with a calmness of countenance that I can never forget, and said, 'I know the color of that blood — it is arterial blood — I cannot be deceived in that color — that drop of blood is my death-warrant — I must die.'"

He continued in failing health through the spring, sometimes better and sometimes worse, unable to do any work beyond the revising of his last volume of poems for the press. This appeared in the summer of 1820. It was called, *Lamia, Isabella, The Eve of St. Agnes and Other Poems*. The fragment of *Hyperion* was included at the request of the publishers. The reviews of this volume were respectful, and in many cases even enthusiastic. Jeffrey praised it in the *Edinburgh Review*, and poor Keats, in poverty, despairing and dying, began to be recognized as a man of genius. Even Byron, who had seen nothing in Keats's early work, pronounced *Hyperion* worthy of Æschylus.

The poet was by this time, however, too ill to care greatly even for the success for which he had so passionately longed. The fire of his imaginative temperament, shown alike in his poetry and in his love, combined with disease to consume his strength. The physicians warned him that his only chance of life lay in wintering in the south ; and in September he took passage for Naples, accompanied by the young painter, Joseph Severn, whose devoted friendship can never be forgotten or thought of without admiration so long as the name of Keats is remembered.

The invalid reached Rome in November, and in misery, in poverty, in anguish, he lingered on until February 23, 1821. The last letter of his betrothed, which he had lacked the

strength and self-control to read, was placed unopened in his coffin, and he was buried in the Protestant cemetery at Rome, near the pyramid of Caius Cestius. Upon his tombstone, at his request, were placed the words which he had himself chosen as his epitaph: "Here lies one whose name was writ in water." "The cemetery," wrote Shelley in the preface to *Adonais*, the immortal elegy in which he sang the death and glory of the too early dead poet, "is an open space among the ruins, covered in winter with violets and daisies. It might make one in love with death, to think that one should be buried in so sweet a place." In the following year the ashes of Shelley himself were interred a few paces distant.

"The publication of three small volumes of verse," Lord Houghton sums up the life of Keats, "some earnest friendships, one profound passion, and a premature death . . . [are] the only incidents of his career."

III

The reader of poetry is unwise to concern himself too much with the personality of the poet; and yet human interest almost inevitably demands some knowledge of the character of any writer whose work has moved us. It is not unfair to judge something of a poet's intentions and the meaning of his work by the effect which as a man he has had upon those who came most nearly in contact with him; and tried by this test John Keats will rank high. There is no lack of proof of the warmth of affection with which he was regarded by his friends, who retained, in many cases through long lives, the most tender memories of the dead friend whom they had known in the poet. "Whose genius I did not . . . more fully admire than I entirely loved the man," wrote Archdeacon Bailey a quarter of a century after

Keats's death ; and again : " He had a soul of noble integrity, and his common sense was a conspicuous part of his character. Indeed, his character was, in the best sense, manly." " He was the sincerest friend," declared Reynolds, himself a poet not without talent, " the most lovable associate, the deepest listener to the griefs and distresses of all around him ' that ever lived in this tide of times.' " And even the self-absorbed painter Haydon pronounced Keats " the most unselfish of human creatures."

Of his faithful devotion to his art, of his indefatigable labor to improve in the vocation he had chosen, there is abundant testimony. " There is but one way for me," he wrote to a friend. " The road lies through study, application and thought." " I feel assured," he says again, " I should write from the mere yearning and fondness I have for the beautiful, even if my night's labors should be burnt every morning, and no eye ever rest upon them." Nor was he to be deterred by the difficulties which stood in his way. " I think that difficulties nerve the spirit of a man," he says nobly; and he adds, with an unconscious revelation of the keenness with which his sensitive nature felt the stings of adverse fortune and unjust criticism: " They make our prime objects a refuge as well as a passion." When censure or sorrow hurt him, poetry was at once his passion and his refuge. The publication of the revisions which he made in his work from its first draft to the completed form show how careful and painstaking he was, despite the fact that he wrote with so much ardor, and with so much poetical exaltation. Like all men of imaginative temperament, he varied in his mood, being now confident of his high calling and again in bitter doubt. " I have asked myself so often," he says in a letter, " why I should be a poet more than other men, seeing how great a thing it is, how great things are to be gained by it, what a thing it is to be in the mouth

of fame, that at last the idea has grown so monstrously beyond my seeming power of attainment that the other day I nearly consented with myself to drop into a Phaëton." But his genius was strong within him, and would not let him abandon the career to which he was born; and there came moments, moreover, in which he had assurance that his power was genuine and his work enduring; and in one of these he said with simple and modest assurance: "I think I shall be among the English poets after my death."

IV

Among the English poets he is, and of his genius and of his rank it is not easy to write briefly. Rightly viewed, every man of genius belongs to the succession in the priesthood of beauty; and it is not possible to study one without some consideration of all who, preceding him, prepared the way for him, and who, coming after, entered into the fruits of his endeavors. Short as was the life of John Keats, and small as was the actual bulk of his production, there is no one of his contemporaries who holds more distinctly or securely his place as the legitimate successor of the greatest among the English poets before him and as the necessary precursor of those who have followed.

When one is called upon to sum up the characteristics of the work of Keats, it is inevitable that first should come to mind his thrilling sensitiveness to sensuous beauty. His poetic philosophy is summed up in the oft-quoted lines:

"Beauty is truth, truth beauty," — that is all
Ye know on earth, and all ye need to know."

Interpreted in the light of almost all of Keats's earlier expressions, beauty is here to be taken as meaning that aspect of the beautiful which is apparent to the sense of

man,—but to this beauty as perceived and assimilated by the imagination. No personal trait of the poet was more strikingly marked than his exquisite susceptibility to appeals to eye and ear; yet to these appeals it was his imagination which responded. That had he lived he would have developed a high appreciation of that beauty which is purely intellectual and spiritual seems evident from the great advance which he made in the three immortal years which practically comprised his art life; but taking his poetry as it stands, it is largely the wonderful music of an imagination vibrating in quick and delicate response to the delights of sensation. The joy of seeing, of hearing, of feeling,—the intoxication of emotions awakened by pleasurable appeals to senses responsive as the strings of a wind-harp,—this is the motive of the greater part of Keats's poetry. Even love was with him a delight of the sense. It seems to me rather idle to go about in attempts to disguise or evade this fact. It was part of his nature, and it was undoubtedly one of those youthful limitations which he would have outgrown had time been given him. To the exuberant spirit of his highly organized youth that beauty which thrilled him through his delicately excitable senses was the one thing most vital, the one thing most true.

In this connection it is worth while to consider a moment the familiar comment that Keats was essentially a Greek. It is not difficult to see how the phrase came into use, but it is in reality not only empty but misleading. The abundant use of Hellenic myths which distinguished his poetry furnished an easy epithet to those who must ticket the poets, and who are the more eager to tag with an epithet the singer because they are unable to comprehend the song: while those characteristics which were common alike to the Greeks and to the greatest Elizabethans were sufficiently marked in our poet to excuse the adoption of the convenient

phrase even by those who look deeper than the superficial form. Yet it is not Greek but Elizabethan that we must call Keats, if he is to be classified by the aid of a retrospective epithet. There was much in common between the Greeks and the Elizabethans, as indeed there must be between all artists representative of great art periods. In each there were characteristic qualities peculiar to the one age and time or to the other, and of these Keats shared those of his predecessors upon English soil rather than those of the Greeks whose gods he sang and whose myths he endeavored to revivify.

It is only as a means of coming to a better understanding of what Keats was in himself that it is worth while to discuss the question whether he might more aptly be compared to a belated Elizabethan or to a Greek born out of time. In common with both Elizabethans and Hellenes he possessed an imagination joyous, spontaneous, vibrant; with both he shared that devotion to art which is essential to the production of great work; to him as to them the world of the imagination was the one thing most vitally real amid the illusions and evasions of life; to them and to him alike beauty was an enkindling inspiration and its embodiment the highest joy. He had in common with the poets of Greece and of England at its greatest time a certain enchanting directness and simplicity of expression: while from both he differed in his comparative indifference to humanity. Keats shared with the Greeks that pagan sensuousness which revels in the delights of the senses untroubled by moral meaning or responsibility; like the Elizabethans he possessed the perception and appreciation of natural beauty apart from its ethical ministry to man; while from both he differed—and in so far fell below both—by the capability to rest upon a passionate satisfaction in sensuous beauty for its own sake and as an end sufficient in itself.

This last-named characteristic was evidently due in part to the keenness of the young poet's senses and to his ignorance of life. The very acuteness of his perception of beauty made it the more difficult to pierce through the surface to the heart of things. It was inevitable that his vivid temperament, quivering and thrilling from the overwhelming perception of outward beauty, should at first be dazzled and absorbed by this alone. The wonder of it is the rapidity with which Keats was advancing to a higher perception and to a deeper insight when the foreshadow of death chilled him. After *Endymion* there is constantly evident a steadily increasing perception of the relation of beauty to human emotion and to human life. *Endymion* himself is human hardly further than as an embodiment of passion, and with the exception of a single passage in book fourth¹ there is little indication that upon the poet's attention had ever forced themselves the perplexities of thought, of aspiration, of despair, which baffle and agonize the life of man. In the later poems, and especially in the great odes, sympathy with humanity is seen welling up from beneath the too luxurious, blossom-jeweled herbage which had at first choked its spring; and whatever else the poetry of Keats might or might not have been had he lived, it seems certain that it at least must have been more and more deeply human.

V

What has been said indicates and pretty nearly completes the catalogue of the faults and limitations of Keats. They were the faults of youth and a lavishly gifted genius. It

¹ Lines 515-545:—

—“There lies a den,
Beyond the seeming confines of the space
Made for the soul to wander in and trace
Its own existence,” etc.

was in involuntary excusing of the generous faults of his own immaturity that he wrote to a friend: "Poetry should surprise by a fine excess." In writing *Endymion* he seemed to be carrying out the principle laid down by William Blake: "Exuberance is beauty"; and to be hindered by the multiplicity and richness of his own images from seeing beyond them. It may be added that in his portrayal of passion he perhaps never reached the age of discreet reserve; and that while there is naïveté as well as sensuality in it, there is more boyish lack of judgment than either. A graver fault than all others, however, is the unmorality of what he wrote. However convinced we may be that Keats would have developed the moral sense had he lived, and that he would have gone more deeply into the problems of human existence, the fact remains that his work must be judged for what it is. What it might have been may affect our estimate of the poet, but it cannot alter our judgment of the poetry. As it stands the work of Keats is lacking in ethical fibre. Talk of the 'message' of poetry has become so intolerably hackneyed that one hesitates to use the word, yet the truth is that this poet does not bring to his readers that message which mankind claims as its right from the seer gifted by nature with the divine insight of genius.

Yet it is easy to lay too much stress upon this point, and it is still easier to fall into the profound error of confounding ethical quality with mere moralizing. It is no small thing to have taught the vital worth of beauty, and behind all that Keats wrote lies the insistence that beauty is truth because only through beauty can man reach to any theory of harmony between emotion and earthly existence. Whether he specifically and explicitly stated this, even to himself, is of less moment than whether he realized and embodied its deeper and wider significance. He certainly felt the relations of material loveliness to human life; he perceived also

the transitoriness of mere sensuous beauty and of outward joy:—

"Beauty that must die;
And Joy, whose hand is ever at his lips
Bidding adieu."

His limitation lies in the fact that he did not rise in his poetry to the acute perception of that intellectual and spiritual beauty which at once embraces and transcends the delight of the senses. "I have loved the principle of beauty in all things," he wrote in one of his letters, and had he lived he might have felt and explored more deeply the mysteries of life. In the work which he did accomplish, it is in the outward world that his glowing imagination revels. In so far he fell short of the highest; and yet it must never be forgotten how much he did, or that this much is the more because so finely done.

For exquisite and entralling is the art of Keats in its imaginative presentation of sensuous beauty, and completely is it vitalized by the power of a living imagination. In his first published sonnet he wrote:—

"Mongst boughs pavilion'd, where the deer's swift leap
Startles the wild bee from the fox-glove bell";

and the power here shown of sending his imagination after his idea, of so embodying himself in his fancy as to realize the very atmosphere into which it takes the mind, is found in his every page. He identified himself so fully with the thought that it is, so to say, made incarnate and tangible before our eyes. The marvelous richness of his verse is due even more to the vividness with which the reader is made to share the perceptions of the poet than to the astonishing abundance and variety of the thought and images. Examined technically, his style, while it will yield up its ultimate secret no more than any other true poetry,

easily discloses certain means by which its results are obtained. There is unusual happiness of epithet, fine felicity of diction, delicate sensitiveness to word-color, and no less to rhythmical effects ; while there is almost always that directness and simplicity which seem so easy and which are so all but impossible. Above all these is the rare fitness of word to sense, the intimate union of verse and idea. Keats possessed to a high degree that all but supreme gift of being equally sensitive to thought and to the expression which conveys it. The emotion of the idea and the emotion of the language must be felt equally by the perfect poet ; and no writer of the century has rivaled Keats in this dual sensibility. It would hardly be too fanciful to say that he became so completely the thought that he felt the verse in which it was clothed as the consummate actor feels the appropriateness of the robes of the character he plays. The result is that he gives us not a theme and its expression, but that ineffable product of their perfect mingling which we call poetry.

VI

As there is no other poet who has stood so high on the strength of work so inconsiderable in bulk, so there is none who under such conditions of youth and incomplete accomplishment has taken in the history of the development of our literature a place so assured. There is no stronger link between the poetry of the Elizabethan time and that of the Victorian school than John Keats ; and the more closely this statement is examined the more suggestive and the more accurate in substantial effect it is found to be. The spirit of poetic beauty abode in the wilderness throughout the Seventeenth and Eighteenth centuries ; and if Milton sometimes went in stately austerity to declare his allegiance,

if Dryden made hasty tryst now and then at her hidden shrine, and although Herrick and Waller and one and another lyricist now and again caught glimpses of her bright robe gleaming through the dry and barren thickets, it was not until Shelley and Keats brought her back in triumph that she came again to her long vacant throne. Burns had thrilled with the joy of her approach; Wordsworth had made clear the way of her coming; Coleridge had gone out into the desert to see and to hail her nearing; but it was with Keats and Shelley that she came again to bless the haunts of living men.

The influence of Keats upon later poetry is a theme which might be considered at much length without exhausting the subject. Both in verse forms and in poetic diction has his work affected all that has come after. "Keats rediscovered the delight and wonder that lay enchanted in the dictionary," Lowell says happily. His rich and imaginative diction, his felicity of epithet, his fine fitness of phrase, have left their unmistakable trace on almost every page of Tennyson; have, indeed, quickened almost all genuine poetry which has been written since his time. His influence is especially apparent in the work of the pre-Raphaelite school, which almost seems to presuppose him as a necessary antecedent. It is curious to note, it may be remarked in passing, how strongly his posthumous poem, *Hush, hush! tread softly!* suggests the manner of Rossetti and Swinburne. It is hardly possible to read this passionate lyric without wondering whether Keats, if he had lived, might not have developed in a line which would at once have anticipated and outdone the triumphs of these later singers in the vein which is peculiarly their own. Poetry is the expression of a civilization of a people rather than of an individual, and the emotional developments which Rossetti and Swinburne have phrased in our own day were already

in progress when Keats wrote. He was of a genius so acutely sensitive and receptive as to respond to the faintest quiverings in the spiritual and emotional atmosphere, so that he might well have been sufficiently in advance of his time to feel those thrills of which the majority of his countrymen were unconscious until almost half a century later.

Speculations of this sort, however, are rather fascinating than profitable, and deserve mention here only as having some bearing upon the question of the influence of Keats. It is enough in a study so brief as this must be, to point out the place which our poet held as a connecting link between the Elizabethans and the brilliant writers of the Nineteenth century. Less philosophical than Wordsworth, less lyric than Shelley, less spiritual than either; originating little in poetical form,— Keats has yet been an influence no less vital than they. He has handed on the torch which lighted the greatest epoch of English poetry, and the sympathetic student of his poetry is hardly likely to wonder at the conclusion to which Sidney Colvin comes in saying that it seems to him "probable that by power, as well as by temperament and aim, he was the most Shakespearian spirit that has lived since Shakespeare."

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POEMS.



ODE TO A NIGHTINGALE.

I.

My heart aches, and a drowsy numbness pains
My sense, as though of hemlock I had drunk,
Or emptied some dull opiate to the drains
One minute past, and Lethe-wards had sunk:
'Tis not through envy of thy happy lot, 5
But being too happy in thine happiness. —
That thou, light-winged Dryad of the trees, e
In some melodious plot
Of beechen green, and shadows numberless,
Singest of summer in full-throated ease. 10

2.

O for a draught of vintage ! that hath been
Cool'd a long age in the deep-delved earth,
Tasting of Flora and the country green,
Dance, and Provençal song, and sunburnt mirth !
O for a beaker full of the warm South, 15
Full of the true, the blushful Hippocrene,
With beaded bubbles winking at the brim,
And purple-stained mouth :
That I might drink, and leave the world unseen,
And with thee fade away into the forest dim : 20

3.

Fade far away, dissolve, and quite forget
 What thou among the leaves hast never known,
 The weariness, the fever, and the fret
 Here, where men sit and hear each other groan :
 Where palsy shakes a few, sad, last gray hairs, 25
 Where youth grows pale, and spectre-thin, and dies ;
 Where but to think is to be full of sorrow
 And leaden-eyed despairs,
 Where Beauty cannot keep her lustrous eyes,
 Or new Love pine at them beyond to-morrow. 30

4.

Away! away! for I will fly to thee,
 Not charioted by Bacchus and his pards,
 But on the viewless wings of Poesy,
 Though the dull brain perplexes and retards :
 Already with thee! tender is the night, 35
 And haply the Queen-Moon is on her throne,
 Cluster'd around by all her starry Fays ;
 But here there is no light,
 Save what from heaven is with the breezes blown
 Through verdurous glooms and winding mossy ways. 40

5.

I cannot see what flowers are at my feet,
 Nor what soft incense hangs upon the boughs,
 But, in embalmed darkness, guess each sweet
 Wherewith the seasonable month endows
 The grass, the thicket, and the fruit-tree wild; 45
 White hawthorn, and the pastoral eglantine ;
 Fast fading violets cover'd up in leaves ;
 And mid-May's eldest child,

The coming musk-rose, full of dewy wine,
The murmurous haunt of flies on summer eves. 50

6.

Darkling I listen; and, for many a time
I have been half in love with easeful Death,
Call'd him soft names in many a mused rhyme,
To take into the air my quiet breath;
Now more than ever seems it rich to die, 55
To cease upon the midnight with no pain,
While thou art pouring forth thy soul abroad
In such an ecstasy!
Still wouldst thou sing, and I have ears in vain —
To thy high requiem become a sod. 60

7.

Thou wast not born for death, immortal Bird!
No hungry generations tread thee down;
The voice I hear this passing night was heard
In ancient days by emperor and clown:
Perhaps the self-same song that found a path 65
Through the sad heart of Ruth, when, sick for home,
She stood in tears amid the alien corn;
The same that oft-times hath
Charm'd magic casements, opening on the foam
Of perilous seas, in faery lands forlorn. 70

8.

Forlorn! the very word is like a bell
To toll me back from thee to my sole self!
Adieu! the fancy cannot cheat so well
As she is fam'd to do, deceiving elf.
Adieu! adieu! thy plaintive anthem fades 75
Past the near meadows, over the still stream,

Up the hill-side ; and now 't is buried deep
 In the next valley-glades :
 Was it a vision, or a waking dream ?
 Fled is that music : — Do I wake or sleep ? 80

ODE ON A GRECIAN URN.

1.

THOU still unravish'd bride of quietness,
 Thou foster-child of silence and slow time,
 Sylvan historian, who canst thus express
 A flowery tale more sweetly than our rhyme :
 What leaf-fring'd legend haunts about thy shape 5
 Of deities or mortals, or of both,
 In Tempe or the dales of Arcady ?
 What men or gods are these ? What maidens loth ?
 What mad pursuit ? What struggle to escape ?
 What pipes and timbrels ? What wild ecstasy ? 10

2.

Heard melodies are sweet, but those unheard
 Are sweeter ; therefore, ye soft pipes, play on ;
 ✓ Not to the sensual ear, but, more endear'd,
 Pipe to the spirit ditties of no tone :
 Fair youth, beneath the trees, thou canst not leave 15
 Thy song, nor ever can those trees be bare ;
 Bold Lover, never, never canst thou kiss,
 Though winning near the goal — yet, do not grieve ;
 She cannot fade, though thou hast not thy bliss,
For ever wilt thou love, and she be fair ! 20

3.

Ah, happy, happy boughs! that cannot shed
 Your leaves, nor ever bid the Spring adieu:
 And, happy melodist, unwearied,
 For ever piping songs for ever new;
 More happy love! more happy, happy love!
 For ever warm and still to be enjoy'd,
 For ever panting, and for ever young;
 All breathing human passion far above,
 That leaves a heart high-sorrowful and cloy'd,
 A burning forehead, and a parching tongue.

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4.

Who are these coming to the sacrifice?
 To what green altar, O mysterious priest,
 Lead'st thou that heifer lowing at the skies,
 And all her silken flanks with garlands drest?
 What little town by river or sea shore,
 Or mountain-built with peaceful citadel,
 Is emptied of this folk, this pious morn?
 And, little town, thy streets for evermore
 Will silent be; and not a soul to tell
 Why thou art desolate, can e'er return.

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5.

O Attic shape! Fair attitude! with brede
 Of marble men and maidens overwrought,
 With forest branches and the trodden weed;
 Thou, silent form, dost tease us out of thought
 As doth eternity: Cold Pastoral!
 When old age shall this generation waste,
 Thou shalt remain, in midst of other woe
 Than ours, a friend to man, to whom thou say'st,

45

"Beauty is truth, truth beauty," — that is all C
Ye know on earth, and all ye need to know, e 50

ODE TO PSYCHE.

O GODDESS! hear these tuneless numbers, wrung
 By sweet enforcement and remembrance dear,
 And pardon that thy secrets should be sung
 Even into thine own soft-conched ear :
 Surely I dreamt to-day, or did I see 5
 The winged Psyche with awaken'd eyes?
 I wander'd in a forest thoughtlessly,
 And, on the sudden, fainting with surprise,
 Saw two fair creatures, couched side by side 10
 In deepest grass, beneath the whisp'ring roof
 Of leaves and trembled blossoms, where there ran
 A brooklet, scarce espied :
 'Mid hush'd, cool-rooted flowers, fragrant-eyed,
 Blue, silver-white, and budded Tyrian,
 They lay calm-breathing on the bedded grass ; 15
 Their arms embraced, and their pinions too ;
 Their lips touch'd not, but had not bade adieu,
 As if disjoined by soft-handed slumber,
 And ready still past kisses to outnumber 20
 At tender eye-dawn/ of aurgrean love :
 The winged boy I knew ;
 But who wast thou, O happy, happy dove?
 His Psyche true !
 O latest born and loveliest vision far 25
 Of all Olympus' faded hierarchy !
 Fairer than Phœbe's sapphire-region'd star,
 Or Vesper, amorous glow-worm of the sky ;

Fairer than these, though temple thou hast none,
 Nor altar heap'd with flowers ;
 Nor virgin-choir to make delicious moan 30
 Upon the midnight hours ;
 No voice, no lute, no pipe, no incense sweet
 From chain-swung censer teeming ;
 No shrine, no grove, no oracle, no heat
 Of pale-mouth'd prophet dreaming. 35

O brightest ! though too late for antique vows,
 Too, too late for the fond believing lyre,
 When holy were the haunted forest boughs,
 Holy the air, the water, and the fire ;
 Yet even in these days so far retir'd 40
 From happy pieties, thy lucent fans,
 Fluttering among the faint Olympians,
 I see, and sing, by my own eyes inspired.
 So let me be thy choir, and make a moan
 Upon the midnight hours ; 45
 Thy voice, thy lute, thy pipe, thy incense sweet
 From swung censer teeming ;
 Thy shrine, thy grove, thy oracle, thy heat
 Of pale-mouth'd prophet dreaming.

Yes, I will be thy priest, and build a fane 50
 In some untrodden region of my mind,
 Where branched thoughts, new grown with pleasant pain,
 Instead of pines shall murmur in the wind :
 Far, far around shall those dark-cluster'd trees
 Fledge the wild-ridged mountains steep by steep ; 55
 And there by zephyrs, streams, and birds, and bees,
 The moss-lain Dryads shall be lull'd to sleep ;
 And in the midst of this wide quietness
 A rosy sanctuary will I dress

With the wreath'd trellis of a working brain, 60
 With buds, and bells, and stars without a name,
 With all the gardener Fancy e'er could feign,
 Who, breeding flowers, will never breed the same :
 And there shall be for thee all soft delight
 That shadowy thought can win, 65
 A bright torch, and a casement ope at night,
 To let the warm Love in !

 TO AUTUMN.

SEASON of mists and mellow fruitfulness,
 Close bosom-friend of the maturing sun ;
 Conspiring with him how to load and bless
 With fruit the vines that round the thatch-eves run ; 5
 To bend with apples the moss'd cottage-trees,
 And fill all fruit with ripeness to the core ;
 To swell the gourd, and plump the hazel shells
 With a sweet kernel ; to set budding more,
 And still more, later flowers for the bees,
 Until they think warm days will never cease, 10
 For Summer has o'er-brimm'd their clammy cells.

2.

Who hath not seen thee oft amid thy store ?
 Sometimes whoever seeks abroad may find
 Thee sitting careless on a granary floor,
 Thy hair soft-lifted by the winnowing wind ; 15
 Or on a half-reap'd furrow sound asleep,
 Drows'd with the fume of poppies, while thy hook

Spares the next swath and all its twined flowers :
 And sometimes like a gleaner thou dost keep
 Steady thy laden head across a brook ; 20
 Or by a cider-press, with patient look,
 Thou watchest the last oozings hours by hours.

3.

~~Where are the songs of Spring? Ay, where are they?
 Think not of them, thou hast thy music too, —~~
 While barred clouds bloom the soft-dying day, 25
 And touch the stubble-plains with rosy hue ;
 Then in a wailful choir the small gnats mourn
 Among the river salallows, borne aloft
 Or sinking as the light wind lives or dies ;
 And full-grown lambs loud bleat from hilly bourn ; 30
 Hedge-crickets sing ; and now with treble soft
 The red-breast whistles from a garden-croft ;
 And gathering swallows twitter in the skies.

 ODE ON MELANCHOLY.

I.

No, no, go not to Lethe, neither twist
 Wolf's-bane, tight-rooted, for its poisonous wine ;
 Nor suffer thy pale forehead to be kiss'd
 By nightshade, ruby grape of Proserpine ;
 Make not your rosary of yew-berries, 5
 Nor let the beetle, nor the death-moth be
 Your mournful Psyche, nor the downy owl
 A partner in your sorrow's mysteries ;
 For shade to shade will come too drowsily,
 And drown the wakeful anguish of the soul. 10

2.

But when the melancholy fit shall fall
 Sudden from heaven like a weeping cloud,
 That fosters the droop-headed flowers all,
 And hides the green hill in an April shroud ;
 Then glut thy sorrow on a morning rose, 15
 Or on the rainbow of the salt sand-wave,
Or on the wealth of globed peonies ;
 Or if thy mistress some rich anger shows,
 Emprison her soft hand, and let her rave,
 And feed deep, deep upon her peerless eyes. 20

3.

She dwells with Beauty — Beauty that must die ;
And Joy, whose hand is ever at his lips
Bidding adieu ; and aching Pleasure nigh,
Turning to poison while the bee-mouth sips :
 Ay, in the very temple of Delight 25
 Veil'd Melancholy has her sovran shrine,
 Though seen of none save him whose strenuous
 tongue
 Can burst Joy's grape against his palate fine ;
 His soul shall taste the sadness of her might,
 And be among her cloudy trophies hung. 30

 FANCY.

EVER let the Fancy roam,
 Pleasure never is at home :
 At a touch sweet Pleasure melteth,
 Like to bubbles when rain pelteth ;

Then let winged Fancy wander 5
 Through the thought still spread beyond her:
 Open wide the mind's cage-door,
 She'll dart forth, and cloudward soar.
 O sweet Fancy! let her loose;
 Summer's joys are spoilt by use, 10
 And the enjoying of the Spring
 Fades as does its blossoming;
 Autumn's red-lipp'd fruitage too,
 Blushing through the mist and dew,
 Cloys with tasting: What do then? 15
 Sit thee by the ingle, when
 The sear faggot blazes bright,
 Spirit of a winter's night:
 When the soundless earth is muffled,
 And the caked snow is shuffled 20
 From the ploughboy's heavy shoon;
 When the Night doth meet the Noon
 In a dark conspiracy
 To banish Even from her sky.
 Sit thee there, and send abroad, 25
 With a mind self-overaw'd,
 Fancy, high-commission'd: — send her!
 She has vassals to attend her:
 She will bring, in spite of frost,
 Beauties that the earth hath lost; 30
 She will bring thee, all together,
 All delights of summer weather;
 All the buds and bells of May,
 From dewy sward or thorny spray;
 All the heaped Autumn's wealth, 35
 With a still, mysterious stealth:
 She will mix these pleasures up
 Like three fit wines in a cup,

And thou shalt quaff it: — thou shalt hear
 Distant harvest-carols clear ; 40
 Rustle of the reaped corn ;
 Sweet birds antheming the morn :
 And, in the same moment — hark !
 'Tis the early April lark,
 Or the rooks, with busy caw, 45
 Foraging for sticks and straw.
 Thou shalt, at one glance, behold
 The daisy and the marigold ;
 White-plum'd lilies, and the first
 Hedge-grown primrose that hath burst ; 50
 Shaded hyacinth, alway
 Sapphire queen of the mid-May ;
 And every leaf, and every flower
 Pearled with the self-same shower.
 Thou shalt see the field-mouse peep 55
 Meagre from its celled sleep ;
 And the snake all winter-thin
 Cast on sunny bank its skin ;
 Freckled nest-eggs thou shalt see
 Hatching in the hawthorn-tree, 60
 When the hen-bird's wing doth rest
 Quiet on her mossy nest ;
 Then the hurry and alarm
 When the bee-hive casts its swarm ;
 Acorns ripe down-pattering, 65
 While the autumn breezes sing.

Oh, sweet Fancy! let her loose ;
 Every thing is spoilt by use :
 Where 's the cheek that doth not fade,
 Too much gaz'd at? Where 's the maid 70
 Whose lip mature is ever new?
 Where 's the eye, however blue,

Doth not weary? Where's the face
 One would meet in every place?
 Where's the voice, however soft, 75
 One would hear so very oft?
 At a touch sweet Pleasure melteth
 Like to bubbles when rain pelteth.
 Let, then, winged Fancy find
 Thee a mistress to thy mind: 80
 Dulcet-eyed as Ceres' daughter,
 Ere the God of Torment taught her
 How to frown and how to chide;
 With a waist and with a side
 White as Hebe's, when her zone 85
 Slipt its golden clasp, and down
 Fell her kirtle to her feet,
 While she held the goblet sweet,
 And Jove grew languid. — Break the mesh
 Of the Fancy's silken leash: 90
 Quickly break her prison-string
 And such joys as these she'll bring.—
 Let the winged Fancy roam,
 Pleasure never is at home.

 ODE.

BARDS of Passion and of Mirth,
 Ye have left your souls on earth!
 Have ye souls in heaven too.
 Double-lived in regions new? 5
 Yes, and those of heaven commune
 With the spheres of sun and moon;
 With the noise of fountains wond'rous,
 And the parle of voices thund'rous;

With the whisper of heaven's trees
 And one another, in soft ease 10
 Seated on Elysian lawns
 Brows'd by none but Dian's fawns;
 Underneath large bluebells tented,
 Where the daisies are rose-scented,
 And the rose herself has got 15
 Perfume which on earth is not;
 Where the nightingale doth sing
 Not a senseless, tranced thing,
 But divine melodious truth;
 Philosophic numbers smooth; 20
 Tales and golden histories
 Of heaven and its mysteries.

Thus ye live on high, and then
 On the earth ye live again;
 And the souls ye left behind you 25
 Teach us, here, the way to find you,
 Where your other souls are joying,
 Never slumber'd, never cloying.
 Here, your earth-born souls still speak
 To mortals, of their little week; 30
 Of their sorrows and delights;
 Of their passions and their spites;
 Of their glory and their shame;
 What doth strengthen and what maim.
 Thus ye teach us, every day, 35
 Wisdom, though fled far away.

Bards of Passion and of Mirth,
 Ye have left your souls on earth!
 Ye have souls in heaven too,
 Double-lived in regions new! 40

LINES ON THE MERMAID TAVERN.

SOULS of Poets dead and gone,
 What Elysium have ye known,
 Happy field or mossy cavern,
 Choicer than the Mermaid Tavern?
 Have ye tippled drink more fine
 Than mine host's Canary wine?
 Or are fruits of Paradise
 Sweeter than those dainty pies
 Of venison? O generous food!
 Drest as though bold Robin Hood
 Would, with his maid Marian,
 Sup and bowse from horn and can.

I have heard that on a day
 Mine host's sign-board flew away,
 Nobody knew whither, till
 An astrologer's old quill
 To a sheepskin gave the story,
 Said he saw you in your glory,
 Underneath a new old-sign
 Sipping beverage divine,
 And pledging with contented smack
 The Mermaid in the Zodiac.

Souls of Poets dead and gone,
 What Elysium have ye known,
 Happy field or mossy cavern,
 Choicer than the Mermaid Tavern?

ROBIN HOOD.

To a Friend.

No ! those days are gone away,
 And their hours are old and gray,
 And their minutes buried all
 Under the down-trodden pall
 Of the leaves of many years : 5
 Many times have winter's shears,
 Frozen North, and chilling East,
 Sounded tempests to the feast
 Of the forest's whispering fleeces,
 Since men knew nor rent nor leases. 10

No, the bugle sounds no more,
 And the twanging bow no more ;
 Silent is the ivory shrill
 Past the heath and up the hill ;
 There is no mid-forest laugh, 15
 Where lone Echo gives the half
 To some wight, amaz'd to hear
 Jestings, deep in forest drear.

On the fairest time of June
 You may go, with sun or moon, 20
 Or the seven stars to light you,
 Or the polar ray to right you ;
 But you never may behold
 Little John, or Robin bold ;
 Never one, of all the clan, 25
 Thrumming on an empty can
 Some old hunting ditty, while
 He doth his green way beguile
 To fair hostess Merriment,
 Down beside the pasture Trent ; 30

For he left the merry tale
 Messenger for spicy ale.

Gone, the merry morris din ;
 Gone, the song of Gamelyn ;
 Gone, the tough-belted outlaw 35
 Idling in the "grenè shawe" ;
 All are gone away and past !
 And if Robin should be cast
 Sudden from his turfed grave,
 And if Marian should have 40
 Once again her forest days,
 She would weep, and he would craze :
 He would swear, for all his oaks,
 Fall'n beneath the dockyard strokes,
 Have rotted on the briny seas ; 45
 She would weep that her wild bees
 Sang not to her — strange ! that honey
 Can't be got without hard money !

So it is : yet let us sing,
 Honour to the old bow-string ! 50
 Honour to the bugle-horn !
 Honour to the woods unshorn !
 Honour to the Lincoln green !
 Honour to the archer keen !
 Honour to tight Little John, 55
 And the horse he rode upon !
 Honour to bold Robin Hood,
 Sleeping in the underwood !
 Honour to Mad Marian,
 And to all the Sherwood-clan ! 60
 Though their days have hurried by,
 Let us two a burden try.

"I STOOD TIP-TOE UPON A LITTLE HILL."

"Places of nestling green for Poets made."

STORY OF RIMINI.

I STOOD tip-toe upon a little hill,
 The air was cooling, and so very still,
 That the sweet buds which with a modest pride
 Pull droopingly, in slanting curve aside,
 Their scantily leav'd, and finely tapering stems, 5
 Had not yet lost those starry diadems
 Caught from the early sobbing of the morn.
 The clouds were pure and white as flocks new shorn,
 And fresh from the clear brook; sweetly they slept
 On the blue fields of heaven, and then there crept 10
 A little noiseless noise among the leaves,
 Born of the very sigh that silence heaves:
 For not the faintest motion could be seen
 Of all the shades that slanted o'er the green.
 There was wide wand'ring for the greediest eye, 15
 To peer about upon variety;
 Far round the horizon's crystal air to skim,
 And trace the dwindled edgings of its brim;
 To picture out the quaint, and curious bending
 Of a fresh woodland alley, never ending; 20
 Or by the bowery clefts, and leafy shelves,
 Guess where the jaunty streams refresh themselves.
 I gazed awhile, and felt as light, and free
 As though the fanning wings of Mercury
 Had play'd upon my heels: I was light-hearted, 25
 And many pleasures to my vision started;
 So I straightway began to pluck a posey
 Of luxuries bright, milky, soft and rosy.
 A bush of May flowers with the bees about them;
 Ah, sure no tasteful nook would be without them: 30

And let a lush laburnum oversweep them,
And let long grass grow round the roots to keep them
Moist, cool and green ; and shade the violets,
That they may bind the moss in leafy nets.

A filbert hedge with wildbriar overtwin'd,
And clumps of woodbine taking the soft wind
Upon their summer thrones ; there too should be
The frequent chequer of a youngling tree,
That with a score of light green brethren shoots
From the quaint mossiness of aged roots : 40
Round which is heard a spring-head of clear waters
Babbling so wildly of its lovely daughters
The spreading bluebells : it may haply mourn
That such fair clusters should be rudely torn
From their fresh beds, and scatter'd thoughtlessly 45
By infant hands, left on the path to die.

Open afresh your round of starry folds,
Ye ardent marigolds !
Dry up the moisture from your golden lids,
For great Apollo bids 50
That in these days your praises should be sung
On many harps, which he has lately strung ;
And when again your dewiness he kisses,
Tell him, I have you in my world of blisses :
So haply when I rove in some far vale, 55
His mighty voice may come upon the gale.

Here are sweet peas, on tip-toe for a flight :
With wings of gentle flush o'er delicate white,
And taper fingers catching at all things,
To bind them all about with tiny rings. 60

Linger awhile upon some bending planks
That lean against a streamlet's rushy banks,

And watch intently Nature's gentle doings :
 They will be found softer than ring-dove's cooings. 65
 How silent comes the water round that bend ;
 Not the minutest whisper does it send
 To the o'erhanging shallows : blades of grass
 Slowly across the chequer'd shadows pass.
 Why, you might read two sonnets, ere they reach
 To where the hurrying freshnesses aye preach 70
 A natural sermon o'er their pebbly beds ;
 Where swarms of minnows show their little heads,
 Staying their wavy bodies 'gainst the streams,
 To taste the luxury of sunny beams
 Temper'd with coolness. How they ever wrestle 75
 With their own sweet delight, and ever nestle
 Their silver bellies on the pebbly sand.
 If you but scantily hold out the hand,
 That very instant not one will remain ;
 But turn your eye, and they are there again. 80
 The ripples seem right glad to reach those cresses,
 And cool themselves among the em'rald tresses ;
 The while they cool themselves, they freshness give,
 And moisture, that the bowery green may live :
 So keeping up an interchange of favours, 85
 Like good men in the truth of their behaviours.
 Sometimes goldfinches one by one will drop
 From low hung branches ; little space they stop ;
 But sip, and twitter, and their feathers sleek ;
 Then off at once, as in a wanton freak : 90
 Or perhaps, to show their black and golden wings,
 Pausing upon their yellow flutterings.
 Were I in such a place, I sure should pray
 That naught less sweet, might call my thoughts away,
 Than the soft rustle of a maiden's gown 95
 Fanning away the dandelion's down ;

Than the light music of her nimble toes
 Patting against the sorrel as she goes.
 How she would start, and blush, thus to be caught
 Playing in all her innocence of thought. 100
 O let me lead her gently o'er the brook.
 Watch her half-smiling lips, and downward look ;
 O let me for one moment touch her wrist ;
 Let me one moment to her breathing list ;
 And as she leaves me may she often turn 105
 Her fair eyes looking through her locks auburne.
 What next? A tuft of evening primroses,
 O'er which the mind may hover till it dozes ;
 O'er which it well might take a pleasant sleep,
 But that 't is ever startled by the leap 110
 Of buds into ripe flowers ; or by the flitting
 Of diverse moths, that aye their rest are quitting ;
 Or by the moon lifting her silver rim
 Above a cloud, and with a gradual swim
 Coming into the blue with all her light. 115
 O Maker of sweet poets, dear delight
 Of this fair world, and all its gentle livers ;
 Spangler of clouds, halo of crystal rivers,
 Mingler with leaves, and dew and tumbling streams,
 Closer of lovely eyes to lovely dreams, 120
 Lover of loneliness, and wandering,
 Of upcast eye, and tender pondering !
 Thee must I praise above all other glories
 That smile us on to tell delightful stories.
 For what has made the sage or poet write 125
 But the fair paradise of Nature's light ?
 In the calm grandeur of a sober line,
 We see the waving of the mountain pine ;
 And when a tale is beautifully staid,
 We feel the safety of a hawthorn glade : 130

When it is moving on luxurious wings,
 The soul is lost in pleasant smotherings :
 Fair dewy roses brush against our faces,
 And flowering laurels spring from diamond vases :
 O'erhead we see the jasmine and sweet briar, 135
 And bloomy grapes laughing from green attire ;
 While at our feet, the voice of crystal bubbles
 Charms us at once away from all our troubles :
 So that we feel uplifted from the world,
 Walking upon the white clouds wreath'd and curl'd. 140
 So felt he, who first told, how Psyche went
 On the smooth wind to realms of wonderment ;
 What Psyche felt, and Love, when their full lips
 First touch'd ; what amorous and fondling nips
 They gave each other's cheeks ; with all their sighs, 145
 And how they kist each other's tremulous eyes :
 The silver lamp, — the ravishment, — the wonder —
 The darkness, — loneliness, — the fearful thunder ;
 Their woes gone by, and both to heaven upflown,
 To bow for gratitude before Jove's throne. 150
 So did he feel, who pull'd the boughs aside,
 That we might look into a forest wide,
 To catch a glimpse of Fawns, and Dryades
 Coming with softest rustle through the trees ;
 And garlands woven of flowers wild, and sweet, 155
 Upheld on ivory wrists, or sporting feet :
 Telling us how fair, trembling Syrinx fled
 Arcadian Pan, with such a fearful dread.
 Poor Nymph, — poor Pan, — how did he weep to find.
 Naught but a lovely sighing of the wind 160
 Along the reedy stream ; a half-heard strain,
 Full of sweet desolation — balmy pain.

What first inspired a bard of old to sing
 Narcissus pining o'er the untainted spring ?

In some delicious ramble, he had found 165
A little space, with boughs all woven round ;
And in the midst of all, a clearer pool
Than e'er reflected in its pleasant cool,
The blue sky here, and there, serenely peeping
Through tendril wreaths fantastically creeping. 170
And on the bank a lonely flower he spied,
A meek and forlorn flower, with naught of pride,
Drooping its beauty o'er the watery clearness,
To woo its own sad image into nearness :
Deaf to light Zephyrus it would not move ; 175
But still would seem to droop, to pine, to love.
So while the Poet stood in this sweet spot,
Some fainter gleamings o'er his fancy shot ;
Nor was it long ere he had told the tale
Of young Narcissus, and sad Echo's bale. 180

Where had he been, from whose warm head out-flew
That sweetest of all songs, that ever new,
That aye refreshing, pure deliciousness,
Coming ever to bless
The wanderer by moonlight? to him bringing 185
Shapes from the invisible world, unearthly singing
From out the middle air, from flowery nests,
And from the pillowy silkiness that rests
Full in the speculation of the stars.
Ah! surely he had burst our mortal bars ; 190
Into some wond'rous region he had gone,
To search for thee, divine Endymion !

He was a Poet, sure a lover too,
Who stood on Latmus' top, what time there blew
Soft breezes from the myrtle vale below : 195
And brought in faintness solemn, sweet, and slow

A hymn from Dian's temple ; while upswelling,
 The incense went to her own starry dwelling.
 But though her face was clear as infant's eyes,
 Though she stood smiling o'er the sacrifice, 200
 The Poet wept at her so piteous fate,
 Wept that such beauty should be desolate :
 So in fine wrath some golden sounds he won,
 And gave meek Cynthia her Endymion.

Queen of the wide air ; thou most lovely queen 205
 Of all the brightness that mine eyes have seen !
 As thou exceedest all things in thy shine,
 So every tale, does this sweet tale of thine.
 O for three words of honey, that I might
 Tell but one wonder of thy bridal night ! 210

Where distant ships do seem to show their keels,
 Phœbus awhile delay'd his mighty wheels,
 And turn'd to smile upon thy bashful eyes,
 Ere he his unseen pomp would solemnize.
 The evening weather was so bright, and clear, 215
 That men of health were of unusual cheer ;
 Stepping like Homer at the trumpet's call,
 Or young Apollo on the pedestal :
 And lovely women were as fair and warm,
 As Venus looking sideways in alarm. 220
 The breezes were ethereal, and pure,
 And crept through half clos'd lattices to cure
 The languid sick ; it cool'd their fever'd sleep,
 And soothed them into slumbers full and deep.
 Soon they awoke clear-ey'd : nor burnt with thirsting, 225
 Nor with hot fingers, nor with temples bursting :
 And springing up, they met the wond'ring sight
 Of their dear friends, nigh foolish with delight ;

Who feel their arms, and breasts, and kiss and stare,
 And on their placid foreheads part the hair. 230
 Young men, and maidens at each other gaz'd
 With hands held back, and motionless, amaz'd
 To see the brightness in each other's eyes ;
 And so they stood, fill'd with a sweet surprise,
 Until their tongues were loos'd in poesy. 235
 Therefore no lover did of anguish die :
 But the soft numbers, in that moment spoken,
 Made silken ties, that never may be broken.
 Cynthia ! I cannot tell the greater blisses,
 That follow'd thine, and thy dear shepherd's kisses : 240
 Was there a Poet born ? — But now no more,
 My wand'ring spirit must no further soar.

SPECIMEN OF AN INDUCTION TO A POEM.

Lo ! I must tell a tale of chivalry ;
 For large white plumes are dancing in mine eye.
 Not like the formal crest of latter days :
 But bending in a thousand graceful ways ;
 So graceful, that it seems no mortal hand, 5
 Or e'en the touch of Archimago's wand,
 Could charm them into such an attitude.
 We must think rather, that in playful mood,
 Some mountain breeze had turn'd its chief delight,
 To show this wonder of its gentle might. 10
 Lo ! I must tell a tale of chivalry ;
 For while I muse, the lance points slantingly
 Athwart the morning air : some lady sweet,
 Who cannot feel for cold her tender feet,
 From the worn top of some old battlement 15
 Hails it with tears, her stout defender sent :

And from her own pure self no joy dissembling,
 Wraps round her ample robe with happy trembling.
 Sometimes, when the good Knight his rest would take,
 It is reflected, clearly, in a lake, 20
 With the young ashen boughs, 'gainst which it rests,
 And th' half seen mossiness of linnets' nests.
 Ah! shall I ever tell its cruelty,
 When the fire flashes from a warrior's eye,
 And his tremendous hand is grasping it, 25
 And his dark brow for very wrath is knit?
 Or when his spirit, with more calm intent,
 Leaps to the honors of a tournament,
 And makes the gazers round about the ring
 Stare at the grandeur of the balancing? 30
 No, no! this is far off:— then how shall I
 Revive the dying tones of minstrelsy,
 Which linger yet about lone Gothic arches,
 In dark green ivy, and among wild larches?
 How sing the splendour of the revelries, 35
 When butts of wine are drunk off to the lees?
 And that bright lance, against the fretted wall,
 Beneath the shade of stately banneral,
 Is slung with shining cuirass, sword, and shield?
 Where ye may see a spur in bloody field. 40
 Light-footed damsels move with gentle paces
 Round the wide hall, and show their happy faces;
 Or stand in courtly talk by fives and sevens:
 Like those fair stars that twinkle in the heavens.
 Yet must I tell a tale of chivalry: 45
 Or wherefore comes that steed so proudly by?
 Wherefore more proudly does the gentle knight,
 Rein in the swelling of his ample might?
 Spenser! thy brows are arched, open, kind,
 And come like a clear sun-rise to my mind; 50

And always does my heart with pleasure dance,
 When I think on thy noble countenance :
 Where never yet was aught more earthly seen
 Than the pure freshness of thy laurels green.
 Therefore, great bard, I not so fearfully 55
 Call on thy gentle spirit to hover nigh
 My daring steps : or if thy tender care,
 Thus startled unaware,
 Be jealous that the foot of other wight
 Should madly follow that bright path of light 60
 Trac'd by thy lov'd Libertas : he will speak,
 And tell thee that my prayer is very meek ;
 That I will follow with due reverence,
 And start with awe at mine own strange pretence.
 Him thou wilt hear : so I will rest in hope 65
 To see wide plains, fair trees and lawnly slope :
 The morn, the eve, the light, the shade, the flowers ;
 Clear streams, smooth lakes, and overlooking towers.

 CALIDORE.

A FRAGMENT.

YOUNG Calidore is paddling o'er the lake ;
 His healthful spirit eager and awake
 To feel the beauty of a silent eve,
 Which seem'd full loath this happy world to leave ;
 The light dwelt o'er the scene so lingeringly. 5
 He bares his forehead to the cool blue sky,
 And smiles at the far clearness all around,
 Until his heart is well nigh over wound,
 And turns for calmness to the pleasant green
 Of easy slopes, and shadowy trees that lean 10

So elegantly o'er the waters' brim
 And show their blossoms trim.
 Scarce can his clear and nimble eye-sight follow
 The freaks, and dartings of the black-wing'd swallow,
 Delighting much, to see it half at rest, 15
 Dip so refreshingly its wings, and breast
 'Gainst the smooth surface, and to mark anon,
 The widening circles into nothing gone.

And now the sharp keel of his little boat
 Comes up with ripple, and with easy float, 20
 And glides into a bed of water lilies :
 Broad leav'd are they and their white canopies
 Are upward turn'd to catch the heavens' dew.
 Near to a little island's point they grew ;
 Whence Calidore might have the goodliest view 25
 Of this sweet spot of earth. The bowery shore
 Went off in gentle windings to the hoar
 And light blue mountains : but no breathing man
 With a warm heart, and eye prepared to scan
 Nature's clear beauty, could pass lightly by 30
 Objects that look'd out so invitingly
 On either side. These, gentle Calidore
 Greeted, as he had known them long before.

The sidelong view of swelling leafiness,
 Which the glad setting sun in gold doth dress ; 35
 Whence ever and anon the jay outsprings,
 And scales upon the beauty of its wings.

The lonely turret, shatter'd, and outworn,
 Stands venerably proud ; too proud to mourn
 Its long lost grandeur : fir trees grow around, 40
 Aye dropping their hard fruit upon the ground.

The little chapel with the cross above
 Upholding wreaths of ivy ; the white dove,
 That on the window spreads his feathers light,
 And seems from purple clouds to wing its flight. 45

Green tufted islands casting their soft shades
 Across the lake ; sequester'd leafy glades,
 That through the dimness of their twilight show
 Large dock leaves, spiral foxgloves, or the glow
 Of the wild cat's eyes, or the silvery stems 50
 Of delicate birch trees, or long grass which hems
 A little brook. The youth had long been viewing
 These pleasant things, and heaven was bedewing
 The mountain flowers, when his glad senses caught
 A trumpet's silver voice. Ah ! it was fraught 55
 With many joys for him : the warder's ken
 Had found white coursers prancing in the glen :
 Friends very dear to him he soon will see ;
 So pushes off his boat most eagerly,
 And soon upon the lake he skims along, 60
 Deaf to the nightingale's first under-song :
 Nor minds he the white swans that dream so sweetly :
 His spirit flies before him so completely.

And now he turns a jutting point of land,
 Whence may be seen the castle gloomy, and grand : 65
 Nor will a bee buzz round two swelling peaches,
 Before the point of his light shallop reaches
 Those marble steps that through the water dip :
 Now over them he goes with hasty trip,
 And scarcely stays to ope the folding doors : 70
 Anon he leaps along the oaken floors
 Of halls and corridors.

Delicious sounds! those little bright-eyed things
 That float about the air on azure wings,
 Had been less heartfelt by him than the clang 75
 Of clattering hoofs; into the court he sprang,
 Just as two noble steeds, and palfreys twain,
 Were slanting out their necks with loosen'd rein;
 While from beneath the threat'ning portcullis
 They brought their happy burthens. What a kiss, 80
 What gentle squeeze he gave each lady's hand!
 How tremblingly their delicate ankles spanned!
 Into how sweet a trance his soul was gone,
 While whisperings of affection
 Made him delay to let their tender feet 85
 Come to the earth: with an incline so sweet
 From their low palfreys o'er his neck they bent:
 And whether there were tears of languishment,
 Or that the evening dew had pearl'd their tresses,
 He feels a moisture on his cheek, and blesses 90
 With lips that tremble, and with glistening eye
 All the soft luxury
 That nestled in his arms. A dimpled hand,
 Fair as some wonder out of fairy land,
 Hung from his shoulder like the drooping flowers 95
 Of whitest Cassia, fresh from summer showers:
 And this he fondled with his happy cheek
 As if for joy he would no further seek:
 When the kind voice of good Sir Clerimond
 Came to his ear, like something from beyond 100
 His present being: so he gently drew
 His warm arms, thrilling now with pulses new,
 From their sweet thrall, and forward gently bending,
 Thank'd heaven that his joy was never ending;
 While 'gainst his forehead he devoutly press'd 105
 A hand heaven made to succour the distress'd:

A hand that from the world's bleak promontory
 Had lifted Calidore for deeds of glory.
 Amid the pages, and the torches' glare,
 There stood a knight, patting the flowing hair 110
 Of his proud horse's mane: he was withal
 A man of elegance, and stature tall:
 So that the waving of his plumes would be
 High as the berries of a wild ash tree,
 Or as the winged cap of Mercury. 115
 His armour was so dexterously wrought
 In shape, that sure no living man had thought
 It hard, and heavy steel: but that indeed
 It was some glorious form, some splendid weed,
 In which a spirit new come from the skies 120
 Might live, and show itself to human eyes.
 "'T is the far-fam'd, the brave Sir Gondibert,"
 Said the good man to Calidore alert;
 While the young warrior with a step of grace
 Came up, — a courtly smile upon his face, 125
 And mailed hand held out, ready to greet
 The large-ey'd wonder, and ambitious heat
 Of the aspiring boy; who as he led
 Those smiling ladies, often turn'd his head
 To admire the visor arch'd so gracefully 130
 Over a knightly brow: while they went by
 The lamps that from the high-roof'd hall were pendent.
 And gave the steel a shining quite transcendent.

Soon in a pleasant chamber they are seated:
 The sweet-lipp'd ladies have already greeted 135
 All the green leaves that round the window clamber,
 To show their purple stars, and bells of amber.
 Sir Gondibert has doff'd his shining steel,
 Gladdening in the free, and airy feel

Of a light mantle ; and while Clerimond 140
 Is looking round about him with a fond,
 And placid eye, young Calidore is burning
 To hear of knightly deeds, and gallant spurning
 Of all unworthiness ; and how the strong of arm
 Kept off dismay, and terror, and alarm 145
 From lovely woman : while brimful of this,
 He gave each damsel's hand so warm a kiss,
 And had such manly ardour in his eye,
 That each at other look'd half staringly ;
 And then their features started into smiles 150
 Sweet as blue heavens o'er enchanted isles.

Softly the breezes from the forest came,
 Softly they blew aside the taper's flame ;
 Clear was the song from Philomel's far bower,
 Grateful the incense from the lime-tree flower ; 155
 Mysterious, wild, the far-heard trumpet's tone ;
 Lovely the moon in ether, all alone :
 Sweet too the converse of these happy mortals,
 As that of busy spirits when the portals
 Are closing in the west : or that soft humming 160
 We hear around when Hesperus is coming.
 Sweet be their sleep. * * * * *

'WOMAN, WHEN I BEHOLD THEE.'

WOMAN! when I behold thee flippant, vain,
 Inconstant, childish, proud, and full of fancies ;
 Without that modest softening that enhances
 The downcast eye, repentant of the pain
 That its mild light creates to heal again: 5

E'en then, elate, my spirit leaps, and prances,
E'en then my soul with exultation dances
For that to love, so long, I've dormant lain:
But when I see thee meek, and kind, and tender,
Heavens! how desperately do I adore 10
Thy winning graces; — to be thy defender
I hotly burn — to be a Calidore —
A very Red Cross Knight — a stout Leander —
Might I be loved by thee like these of yore.

Light feet, dark violet eyes, and parted hair; 15
Soft dimpled hands, white neck, and creamy breast,
Are things on which the dazzled senses rest
Till the fond, fixed eyes forget they stare.
From such fine pictures, heavens! I cannot dare
To turn my admiration, though unpossess'd 20
They be of what is worthy, — though not drest
In lovely modesty, and virtues rare.
Yet these I leave as thoughtless as a lark;
These lures I straight forget, — e'en ere I dine,
Or thrice my palate moisten: but when I mark 25
Such charms with mild intelligences shine,
My ear is open like a greedy shark,
To catch the tunings of a voice divine.

Ah! who can e'er forget so fair a being?
Who can forget her half-retiring sweets? 30
God! she is like a milk-white lamb that bleats
For man's protection. Surely the All-seeing,
Who joys to see us with his gifts agreeing,
Will never give him pinions, who intreats
Such innocence to ruin, — who vilely cheats 35
A dove-like bosom. In truth there is no freeing
One's thoughts from such a beauty: when I hear

A lay that once I saw her hand awake,
 Her form seems floating palpable, and near ;
 Had I e'er seen her from an arbour take
 A dewy flower, oft would that hand appear,
 And o'er my eyes the trembling moisture shake.

40

SLEEP AND POETRY.

“As I lay in my bed slepe full unmete
 Was unto me, but why that I ne might
 Rest I ne wist, for there n'as erthly wight
 [As I suppose] had more of hertis ese
 Than I, for I n'ad sicknesse nor dise.”

CHAUCER.

WHAT is more gentle than a wind in summer ?
 What is more soothing than the pretty hummer
 That stays one moment in an open flower,
 And buzzes cheerily from bower to bower ?
 What is more tranquil than a musk-rose blowing
 In a green island, far from all men's knowing ?
 More healthful than the leafiness of dales ?
 More secret than a nest of nightingales ?
 More serene than Cordelia's countenance ?
 More full of visions than a high romance ?
 What, but thee, Sleep ? Soft closer of our eyes !
 Low murmurer of tender lullabies !
 Light hoverer around our happy pillows !
 Wreather of poppy buds, and weeping willows !
 Silent entangler of a beauty's tresses !
 Most happy listener ! when the morning blesses
 Thee for enlivening all the cheerful eyes
 That glance so brightly at the new sun-rise.

5

10

15

But what is higher beyond thought than thee?
 Fresher than berries of a mountain tree? 20
 More strange, more beautiful, more smooth, more regal,
 Than wings of swans, than doves, than dim-seen eagle?
 What is it? And to what shall I compare it?
 It has a glory, and naught else can share it:
 The thought thereof is awful, sweet, and holy, 25
 Chasing away all worldliness and folly:
 Coming sometimes like fearful claps of thunder,
 Or the low rumblings earth's regions under:
 And sometimes like a gentle whispering
 Of all the secrets of some wondrous thing 30
 That breathes about us in the vacant air:
 So that we look around with prying stare,
 Perhaps to see shapes of light, aerial limning,
 And catch soft floatings from a faint-heard hymning:
 To see the laurel wreath, on high suspended, 35
 That is to crown our name when life is ended,
 Sometimes it gives a glory to the voice,
 And from the heart up-springs, Rejoice! Rejoice!
 Sounds which will reach the Framer of all things,
 And die away in ardent mutterings. 40

No one who once the glorious sun has seen,
 And all the clouds, and felt his bosom clean
 For his great Maker's presence, but must know
 What 't is I mean, and feel his being glow:
 Therefore no insult will I give his spirit, 45
 By telling what he sees from native merit.

O Poesy! for thee I hold my pen
 That am not yet a glorious denizen
 Of thy wide heaven. — Should I rather kneel
 Upon some mountain-top until I feel 50

A glowing splendour round about me hung,
 And echo back the voice of thine own tongue? —
 O Poesy! for thee I grasp my pen
 That am not yet a glorious denizen
 Of thy wide heaven; yet, to my ardent prayer, 55
 Yield from thy sanctuary some clear air
 Smoothed for intoxication by the breath
 Of flowering bays, that I may die a death
 Of luxury, and my young spirit follow
 The morning sun-beams to the great Apollo 60
 Like a fresh sacrifice; or, if I can bear
 The o'erwhelming sweets, 't will bring me to the fair
 Visions of all places: a bowery nook
 Will be elysium — an eternal book
 Whence I may copy many a lovely saying 65
 About the leaves, and flowers — about the playing
 Of nymphs in woods, and fountains; and the shade
 Keeping a silence round a sleeping maid;
 And many a verse from so strange influence
 That we must ever wonder how, and whence 70
 It came. Also imaginings will hover
 Round my fire-side, and haply there discover
 Vistas of solemn beauty, where I'd wander
 In happy silence, like the clear Meander
 Through its lone vales; and where I found a spot 75
 Of awfuller shade, or an enchanted grot,
 Or a green hill o'erspread with chequered dress
 Of flowers, and fearful from its loveliness,
 Write on my tablets all that was permitted,
 All that was for our human senses fitted. 80
 Then the events of this wide world I'd seize,
 Like a strong giant, and my spirit tease
 Till at its shoulders it should proudly see
 Wings to find out an immortality.

Stop and consider ! life is but a day ; 85
 A fragile dew-drop on its perilous way
 From a tree's summit ; a poor Indian's sleep
 While his boat hastens to the monstrous steep
 Of Montmorenci. Why so sad a moan ?
 Life is the rose's hope, while yet unblown ; 90
 The reading of an ever-changing tale ;
 The light uplifting of a maiden's veil ;
 A pigeon tumbling in clear summer air ;
 A laughing school-boy, without grief or care,
 Riding the springy branches of an elm. 95

O for ten years, that I may overwhelm
 Myself in poesy ; so I may do the deed
 That my own soul has to itself decreed.
 Then I will pass the countries that I see
 In long perspective, and continually 100
 Taste their pure fountains. First the realm I'll pass
Of Flora, and old Pan : sleep in the grass,
 Feed upon apples red, and strawberries,
 And choose each pleasure that my fancy sees :
 Catch the white-handed nymphs in shady places, 105
 To woo sweet kisses from averted faces, —
 Play with their fingers, touch their shoulders white
 Into a pretty shrinking with a bite
 As hard as lips can make it : till agreed
A lovely tale of human life we'll read 110
 And one will teach a tame dove how it best
 May fan the cool air gently o'er my rest ;
 Another, bending o'er her nimble tread,
 Will set a green robe floating round her head,
 And still will dance with ever varied ease, 115
 Smiling upon the flowers and the trees :
 Another will entice me on, and on

Through almond blossoms and rich cinnamon ;
 Till in the bosom of a leafy world
 We rest in silence, like two gems upcurl'd 120
 In the recesses of a pearly shell.

And can I ever bid these joys farewell?
Yes, I must pass them for a nobler life,
Where I may find the agonies, the strife
Of human hearts ; for lo ! I see afar, 125
 O'er sailing the blue cragginess, a car
 And steeds with streamy manes — the charioteer
 Looks out upon the winds with glorious fear :
 And now the numerous trappings quiver lightly
 Along a huge cloud's ridge ; and now with sprightly 130
 Wheel downward come they into fresher skies,
 Tipt round with silver from the sun's bright eyes.
 Still downward with capacious whirl they glide ;
 And now I see them on a green-hill's side
 In breezy rest among the nodding stalks. 135
 The charioteer with wondrous gesture talks
 To the trees and mountains ; and there soon appear
 Shapes of delight, of mystery, and fear,
 Passing along before a dusky space
 Made by some mighty oaks : as they would chase 140
 Some ever-fleeting music on they sweep.
 Lo ! how they murmur, laugh, and smile, and weep :
 Some with upholden hand and mouth severe ;
 Some with their faces muffled to the ear
 Between their arms ; some, clear in youthful bloom 145
 Go glad and smilingly athwart the gloom ;
 Some looking back, and some with upward gaze ;
 Yes, thousands in a thousand different ways
 Flit onward — now a lovely wreath of girls
 Dancing their sleek hair into tangled curls ; 150

And now broad wings. Most awfully intent
 The driver of those steeds is forward bent,
 And seems to listen : O that I might know
 All that he writes with such a hurrying glow.

The visions all are fled — the car is fled 155
 Into the light of heaven, and in their stead
 A sense of real things comes doubly strong,
 And, like a muddy stream, would bear along
 My soul to nothingness : but I will strive
 Against all doubtings, and will keep alive 160
 The thought of that same chariot, and the strange
 Journey it went.

Is there so small a range
In the present strength of manhood, that the high
Imagination cannot freely fly
As she was wont of old? prepare her steeds 165
Paw up against the light, and do strange deeds
Upon the clouds? Has she not shewn us all?
From the clear space of ether, to the small
breath of new buds unfolding? From the meaning
 Of Jove's large eye-brow, to the tender greening 170
 Of April meadows? Here her altar shone,
 E'en in this isle; and who could paragon
 The fervid choir that lifted up a noise
 Of harmony, to where it aye will poise
 Its mighty self of convoluting sound, 175
 Huge as a planet, and like that roll round,
 Eternally around a dizzy void?
 Ay, in those days the Muses were nigh cloy'd
 With honors; nor had any other care
 Than to sing out and sooth their wayy hair. 180

Could all this be forgotten? Yes, a schism
 Nurtured by foppery and barbarism,

Made great Apollo blush for this his land.
 Men were thought wise who could not understand
 His glories : with a puling infant's force 185
 They sway'd about upon a rocking horse,
 And thought it Pegasus. Ah dismal soul'd !
 The winds of heaven blew, the ocean roll'd
 Its gathering waves — ye felt it not. The blue
 Bared its eternal bosom, and the dew 190
 Of summer nights collected still to make
 The morning precious : beauty was awake !
 Why were ye not awake ? But ye were dead
 To things ye knew not of, — were closely wed
 To musty laws lined out with wretched rule 195
 And compass vile : so that ye taught a school
 Of dolts to smooth, inlay, and clip, and fit,
 Till, like the certain wands of Jacob's wit,
 Their verses tallied. Easy was the task :
 A thousand handicraftsmen wore the mask 200
 Of Poesy. Ill-fated, impious race !
 That blasphemed the bright Lyrist to his face,
 And did not know it, — no, they went about,
 Holding a poor, decrepid standard out
 Mark'd with most flimsy mottos, and in large 205
 The name of one Boileau !

O ye whose charge

It is to hover round our pleasant hills !
 Whose congregated majesty so fills
 My boundly reverence, that I cannot trace
 Your hallowed names, in this unholy place, 210
 So near those common folk : did not their shames
 Affright you ? Did our old lamenting Thames
 Delight you ? Did ye never cluster round
 Delicious Avon, with a mournful sound,

And weep? Or did ye wholly bid adieu 215
 To regions where no more the laurel grew?
 Or did ye stay to give a welcoming
 To some lone spirits who could proudly sing
 Their youth away, and die? 'T was even so:
 But let me think away those times of woe: 220
 Now 't is a fairer season; ye have breathed
 Rich benedictions o'er us; ye have wreathed
 Fresh garlands: for sweet music has been heard
 In many places; — some has been upstirr'd
 From out its crystal dwelling in a lake, 225
 By a swan's ebon bill; from a thick brake,
 Nested and quiet in a valley mild,
 Bubbles a pipe; fine sounds are floating wild
 About the earth: happy are ye and glad.
 These things are doubtless: yet in truth we've had 230
 Strange thunders from the potency of song:
 Mingled indeed with what is sweet and strong,
 From majesty: but in clear truth the themes
 Are ugly clubs, the Poets Polyphemes
 Disturbing the grand sea. A drainless shower 235
 Of light is poesy; 't is the supreme of power;
 'T is might half slumb'ring on its own right arm.
 The very archings of her eye-lids charm
 A thousand willing agents to obey,
 And still she governs with the mildest sway: 240
 But strength alone though of the Muses born
 Is like a fallen angel: trees uptorn,
 Darkness, and worms, and shrouds, and sepulchres
 Delight it; for it feeds upon the burrs.
 And thorns of life: forgetting the great end 245
Of poesy, that it should be a friend
To sooth the cares, and lift the thoughts of man.

Yet I rejoice : a myrtle fairer than
 E'er grew in Paphos, from the bitter weeds
 Lifts its sweet head into the air, and feeds 250
 A silent space with ever sprouting green.
 All tenderest birds there find a pleasant screen,
 Creep through the shade with jaunty fluttering,
 Nibble the little cupped flowers and sing.
 Then let us clear away the choking thorns 255
 From round its gentle stem ; let the young fawns,
 Yeaned in after times, when we are flown,
 Find a fresh sward beneath it, overgrown
 With simple flowers : let there nothing be
 More boisterous than a lover's bended knee ; 260
 Naught more ungentle than the placid look
 Of one who leans upon a closed book ;
 Naught more untranquil than the grassy slopes
 Between two hills. All hail delightful hopes !
 As she was wont, th' imagination 265
 Into most lovely labyrinths will be gone,
 And they shall be accounted poet kings
 Who simply tell the most heart-easing things.
 O may these joys be ripe before I die.
 Will not some say that I presumptuously 270
 Have spoken ? that from hastening disgrace
 'T were better far to hide my foolish face ?
 That whining boyhood should with reverence bow
 Ere the dread thunderbolt could reach ? How !
 If I do hide myself, it sure shall be 275
 In the very fane, the light of Poesy :
 If I do fall, at least I will be laid
 Beneath the silence of a poplar shade ;
 And over me the grass shall be smooth shaven ;
 And there shall be a kind memorial graven. 280
 But off Despondence ! miserable bane !

They should not know thee, who athirst to gain
 A noble end, are thirsty every hour.
 What though I am not wealthy in the dower
 Of spanning wisdom ; though I do not know 285
 The shiftings of the mighty winds that blow
 Hither and thither all the changing thoughts
 Of man : though no great minist'ring reason sorts
 Out the dark mysteries of human souls
 To clear conceiving : yet there ever rolls 290
 A vast idea before me, and I glean
 Therefrom my liberty ; thence too I've seen
 The end and aim of Poesy. 'T is clear
 As anything most true ; as that the year
 Is made of the four seasons — manifest 295
 As a large cross, some old cathedral's crest,
 Lifted to the white clouds. Therefore should I
 Be but the essence of deformity,
 A coward, did my very eye-lids wink
 At speaking out what I have dared to think. 300
 Ah ! rather let me like a madman run
 Over some precipice ; let the hot sun
 Melt my Dedalian wings, and drive me down
 Convuls'd and headlong ! Stay ! an inward frown
 Of conscience bids me be more calm awhile. 305
 An ocean dim, sprinkled with many an isle,
 Spreads awfully before me. How much toil !
 How many days ! what desperate turmoil !
 Ere I can have explored its widenesses.
 Ah, what a task ! upon my bended knees, 310
 I could unsay those — no, impossible !
 Impossible !

For sweet relief I'll dwell
 On humbler thoughts, and let this strange assay
 Begun in gentleness die so away.

E'en now all tumult from my bosom fades : 315
 I turn full hearted to the friendly aids
 That smooth the path of honour ; brotherhood,
 And friendliness the nurse of mutual good.
 The hearty grasp that sends a pleasant sonnet
 Into the brain ere one can think upon it ; 320
 The silence when some rhymes are coming out ;
 And when they 're come, the very pleasant rout :
 The message certain to be done to-morrow.
 'T is perhaps as well that it should be to borrow
 Some precious book from out its snug retreat, 325
 To cluster round it when we next shall meet.
 Scarce can I scribble on ; for lovely airs
 Are fluttering round the room like doves in pairs ;
 Many delights of that glad day recalling,
 When first my senses caught their tender falling. 330
 And with these airs come forms of elegance
 Stooping their shoulders o'er a horse's prance,
 Careless, and grand — fingers soft and round
 Parting luxuriant curls ; — and the swift bound
 Of Bacchus from his chariot, when his eye 335
 Made Ariadne's cheek look blushingly.
 Thus I remember all the pleasant flow
 Of words at opening a portfolio.

Things such as these are ever harbingers
 To trains of peaceful images : the stirs 340
 Of a swan's neck unseen among the rushes :
 A linnet starting all about the bushes :
 A butterfly, with golden wings broad parted
 Nestling a rose, convuls'd as though it smarted
 With over pleasure — many, many more, 345
 Might I indulge at large in all my store
 Of luxuries : yet I must not forget

Sleep, quiet with his poppy coronet :
 For what there may be worthy in these rhymes
 I partly owe to him : and thus, the chimes 350
 Of friendly voices had just given place
 To as sweet a silence, when I 'gan retrace
 The pleasant day, upon a couch at ease.
 It was a poet's house who keeps the keys
 Of pleasure's temple. Round about were hung 355
 The glorious features of the bards who sung
 In other ages — cold and sacred busts
 Smiled at each other. Happy he who trusts
 To clear Futurity his darling fame !
 Then there were fauns and satyrs taking aim 360
 At swelling apples with a frisky leap
 And reaching fingers, 'mid a luscious heap
 Of vine leaves. Then there rose to view a fane
 Of liny marble, and thereto a train
 Of nymphs approaching fairly o'er the sward : 365
 One, loveliest, holding her white hand toward
 The dazzling sun-rise : two sisters sweet
 Bending their graceful figures till they meet
 Over the trippings of a little child :
 And some are hearing, eagerly, the wild 370
 Thrilling liquidity of dewy piping.
 See, in another picture, nymphs are wiping
 Cherishingly Diana's timorous limbs : —
 A fold of lawny mantle dabbling swims
 At the bath's edge, and keeps a gentle motion 375
 With the subsiding crystal : as when ocean
 Heaves calmly its broad swelling smoothness o'er
 Its rocky marge, and balances once more
 The patient weeds ; that now unshent by foam
 Feel all about their undulating home. 380
 Sappho's meek head was there half smiling down

At nothing ; just as though the earnest frown
Of over thinking had that moment gone
From off her brow, and left her all alone.

Great Alfred's too, with anxious, pitying eyes, 385
As if he always listened to the sighs
Of the goaded world ; and Kosciusko's worn
By horrid suffrance — mightily forlorn.
Petrarch, outstepping from the shady green,
Starts at the sight of Laura ; nor can wean 390
His eyes from her sweet face. Most happy they !
For over them was seen a free display
Of out-spread wings, and from between them shone
The face of Poesy : from off her throne
She overlook'd things that I scarce could tell. 395
The very sense of where I was might well
Keep Sleep aloof : but more than that there came
Thought after thought to nourish up the flame
Within my breast ; so that the morning light
Surprised me even from a sleepless night ; 400
And up I rose refresh'd, and glad, and gay,
Resolving to begin that very day
These lines ; and howsoever they be done,
I leave them as a father does his son.

STANZAS.

IN a drear-nighted December
Too happy, happy tree,
Thy branches ne'er remember
Their green felicity :

The north cannot undo them, 5
 With a sleety whistle through them ;
 Nor frozen thawings glue them
 From budding at the prime.

In a drear-nighted December,
 Too happy, happy brook, 10
 Thy bubblings ne'er remember
 Apollo's summer look ;
 But with a sweet forgetting,
 They stay their crystal fretting,
 Never, never petting 15
 About the frozen time.

Ah! would 't were so with many
 A gentle girl and boy!
 But were there ever any
 Writh'd not at passed joy? 20
 To know the change and feel it,
 When there is none to heal it,
 Nor numbed sense to steal it,
 Was never said in rhyme.

 FROM AN OPERA.

ASLEEP! O sleep a little while, white pearl !
 And let me kneel, and let me pray to thee,
 And let me call Heaven's blessing on thine eyes,
 And let me breathe into the happy air,
 That doth enfold and touch thee all about, 5
 Vows of my slavery, my giving up,
 My sudden adoration, my great love !

TEIGNMOUTH:

"Some Doggerell."

Sent in a Letter to B. R. Haydon.

1.

HERE all the summer could I stay,
 For there Bishop's teign
 And King's teign
 And Coomb at the clear teign head —
 Where close by the stream 5
 You may have your cream
 All spread upon barley bread.

2.

There's arch Brook
 And there's larch Brook,
 Both turning many a mill : 10
 And cooling the drouth
 Of the salmon's mouth,
 And flattening his silver gill.

3.

There is Wild wood,
 A mild hood 15
 To the sheep on the lea o' the down,
 Where the golden furze,
 With its green, thin spurs,
 Doth catch at the maiden's gown.

4.

There is Newton marsh 20
 With its spear grass harsh —
 A pleasant summer level

Where the maidens sweet
Of the Market Street
Do meet in the dusk to revel. 25

5.

There 's the Barton rich
With dyke and ditch
And hedge for the thrush to live in,
And the hollow tree
For the buzzing bee, 30
And a bank for the wasp to hive in.

6.

And Oh, and Oh,
The daisies blow
And the primroses are awaken'd,
And the violets white 35
Sit in silver plight,
And the green bud 's as long as the spike end.

7.

Then who would go
Into dark Soho,
And chatter with dack'd hair'd critics, 40
When he can stay
For the new-mown hay,
And startle the dappled prickets?

ODE ON INDOLENCE.

“They toil not, neither do they spin.”

1.

ONE morn before me were three figures seen,
 With bowed necks, and joined hands, side-fac'd ;
 And one behind the other stepp'd serene,
 In placid sandals, and in white robes grac'd ;
 They pass'd, like figures on a marble urn, 5
 When shifted round to see the other side ;
 They came again ; as when the urn once more
 Is shifted round, the first seen shades return ;
 And they were strange to me, as may betide
 With vases, to one deep in Phidian lore. 10

2.

How is it, Shadows ! that I knew ye not ?
 How came ye muffled in so hush a mask ?
 Was it a silent deep-disguised plot
 To steal away, and leave without a task
 My idle days ? Ripe was the drowsy hour ; 15
 The blissful cloud of summer-indolence
 Benumb'd my eyes ; my pulse grew less and less ;
 Pain had no sting, and pleasure's wreath no flower :
 O, why did ye not melt, and leave me sense
 Unhaunted quite of all but — nothingness ? 20

3.

A third time pass'd they by, and, passing, turn'd
 Each one the face a moment whiles to me ;
 Then faded, and to follow them I burn'd
 And ach'd for wings, because I knew the three ;

The first was a fair maid, and Love her name ; 25
 The second was Ambition, pale of cheek,
 And ever watchful with fatigued eye ;
 The last, whom I love more, the more of blame
 Is heaped upon her, maiden most unmeek, —
 I knew to be my demon Poesy. 30

4.

They faded, and, forsooth ! I wanted wings :
 O folly ! What is Love ? and where is it ?
 And for that poor Ambition ! it springs
 From a man's little heart's short fever-fit ;
 For Poesy ! — no, — she has not a joy, — 35
 At least for me, — so sweet as drowsy noons,
 And evenings steep'd in honeyed indolence ;
 Oh, for an age so shelter'd from annoy,
 That I may never know how change the moons,
 Or hear the voice of busy common-sense ! 40

5.

And once more came they by ; — alas ! wherefore ?
 My sleep had been embroider'd with dim dreams ;
 My soul had been a lawn besprinkled o'er
 With flowers, and stirring shades, and baffled beams :
 The morn was clouded, but no shower fell, 45
 Tho' in her lids hung the sweet tears of May ;
 The open casement press'd a new-leav'd vine,
 Let in the budding warmth and throstles' lay ;
 O Shadows ! 't was a time to bid farewell !
 Upon your skirts had fallen no tears of mine. 50

6.

So, ye three Ghosts, adieu ! Ye cannot raise
 My head cool-bedded in the flowery grass ;

For I would not be dieted with praise,
 A pet-lamb in a sentimental farce !
 Fade softly from my eyes, and be once more 55
 In masque-like figures on the dreamy urn ;
 Farewell ! I yet have visions for the night,
 And for the day faint visions there is store ;
 Vanish, ye Phantoms ! from my idle spright,
 Into the clouds, and never more return ! 60

 SONG.

I.

HUSH, hush! tread softly! hush, hush, my dear!
 All the house is asleep, but we know very well
 That the jealous, the jealous old bald-pate may hear,
 Tho' you've padded his night-cap — O sweet Isabel!
 Tho' your feet are more light than a Fairy's feet, 5
 Who dances on bubbles where brooklets meet, —
 Hush, hush! soft tiptoe! hush, hush, my dear!
 For less than a nothing the jealous can hear.

2.

No leaf doth tremble, no ripple is there
 On the river, — all 's still, and the night's sleepy eye 10
 Closes up, and forgets all its Lethean care,
 Charm'd to death by the drone of the humming May-fly ;
 And the Moon, whether prudish or complaisant,
 Was fled to her bower, well knowing I want
 No light in the dusk, no torch in the gloom, 15
 But my Isabel's eyes, and her lips pulp'd with bloom.

3.

Lift the latch! ah gently! ah tenderly — sweet!

We are dead if that latchet gives one little clink!

Well done — now those lips, and a flowery seat —

The old man may sleep, and the planets may wink; 20

The shut rose shall dream of our loves, and awake

Full blown, and such warmth for the morning's take,

The stock-dove shall hatch her soft brace and shall coo,

While I kiss to the melody, aching all through!

LA BELLE DAME SANS MERCI.

BALLAD.

I.

O WHAT can ail thee, knight-at-arms,

Alone and palely loitering?

The sedge has wither'd from the lake,

And no birds sing.

2.

O what can ail thee, knight-at-arms, 5

So haggard and so woe-begone?

The squirrel's granary is full,

And the harvest 's done.

3.

I see a lily on thy brow

With anguish moist and fever dew, 10

And on thy cheeks a fading rose

Fast withereth too.

4.

"I met a lady in the meads,
 Full beautiful — a faery's child;
 Her hair was long, her foot was light, 15
 And her eyes were wild.

5.

"I made a garland for her head,
 And bracelets too, and fragrant zone;
 She look'd at me as she did love,
 And made sweet moan. 20

6.

"I set her on my pacing steed,
 And nothing else saw all day long,
 For sideways would she lean, and sing
 A faery's song.

7.

"She found me roots of relish sweet, 25
 And honey wild, and manna-dew,
 And sure in language strange she said —
 'I love thee true.'

8.

"She took me to her elfin grot,
 And there she gaz'd and sighed deep, 30
 And there I shut her wild wild eyes,
 So kiss'd to sleep.

9.

"And there we slumber'd on the moss,
 And there I dream'd — ah! woe betide! —
 The latest dream I ever dream'd 35
 On the cold hill's side.

10.

"I saw pale kings and princes too,
 Pale warriors, death-pale were they all ;
 They cried — 'La Belle Dame sans Merci
 Hath thee in thrall !'

40

11.

"I saw their starved lips in the gloam,
 With horrid warning gaped wide ;
 And I awoke, and found me here
 On the cold hill's side.

12.

"And this is why I sojourn here,
 Alone and palely loitering,
 Though the sedge is wither'd from the lake,
 And no birds sing."

45

 SONNETS.

1.

On first looking into Chapman's Homer.

MUCH have I travell'd in the realms of gold,
 And many goodly states and kingdoms seen ;
 Round many western islands have I been
 Which bards in fealty to Apollo hold.
 Oft of one wide expanse had I been told
 That deep-brow'd Homer ruled as his demesne ;
 Yet did I never breathe its pure serene
 Till I heard Chapman speak out loud and bold :

5

Then felt I like some watcher of the skies
When a new planet swims into his ken;
 Or like stout Cortez when with eagle eyes
He star'd at the Pacific — and all his men
Look'd at each other with a wild surmise —
Silent, upon a peak in Darien.

10

II.

DEDICATION.

To Leigh Hunt, Esq.

GLORY and loveliness have passed away ;
 For if we wander out in early morn,
 No wreathed incense do we see upborne
 Into the east to meet the smiling day :
 No crowd of nymphs soft voic'd and young, and gay, 5
 In woven baskets bringing ears of corn,
 Roses, and pinks, and violets, to adorn
 The shrine of Flora in her early May.
 But there are left delights as high as these,
 And I shall ever bless my destiny, 10
 That in a time, when under pleasant trees
 Pan is no longer sought, I feel a free,
 A leafy luxury, seeing I could please
 With these poor offerings, a man like thee.

III.

Written on the day that Mr. Leigh Hunt left Prison.

WHAT though, for showing truth to flatter'd state,
 Kind Hunt was shut in prison, yet has he,
 In his immortal spirit, been as free
 As the sky-searching lark, and as elate.

Minion of grandeur! think you he did wait? 5
 Think you he naught but prison walls did see,
 Till, so unwilling, thou unturn'dst the key?
 Ah, no! far happier, nobler was his fate!
 In Spenser's halls he stray'd, and bowers fair,
 Culling enchanted flowers; and he flew 10
 With daring Milton through the fields of air:
 To regions of his own his genius true
 Took happy flights. Who shall his fame impair
 When thou art dead, and all thy wretched crew?

IV.

How many bards gild the lapses of time!
 A few of them have ever been the food
 Of my delighted fancy, — I could brood
 Over their beauties, earthly, or sublime:
 And often, when I sit me down to rhyme, 5
 These will in throngs before my mind intrude:
 But no confusion, no disturbance rude
 Do they occasion; 't is a pleasing chime.
 So the unnumber'd sounds that evening store;
 The songs of birds — the whisp'ring of the leaves — 10
 The voice of waters — the great bell that heaves
 With solemn sound, — and thousand others more,
 That distance of recognizance bereaves,
 Make pleasing music, and not wild uproar.

V.

KEEN, fitful gusts are whisp'ring here and there
 Among the bushes half leafless, and dry;
 The stars look very cold about the sky,
 And I have many miles on foot to fare.

Yet feel I little of the cool bleak air, 5
 Or of the dead leaves rustling drearily,
 Or of those silver lamps that burn on high,
 Or of the distance from home's pleasant lair :
 For I am brimful of the friendliness
 That in a little cottage I have found ; 10
 Of fair-hair'd Milton's eloquent distress,
 And all his love for gentle Lycid drown'd ;
 Of lovely Laura in her light green dress,
 And faithful Petrarch gloriously crown'd.

VI.

To G. A. W.

NYMPH of the downward smile and sidelong glance,
 In what diviner moments of the day
 Art thou most lovely? When gone far astray
 Into the labyrinths of sweet utterance,
 Or when serenely wand'ring in a trance 5
 Of sober thought? Or when starting away
 With careless robe to meet the morning ray
 Thou spar'st the flowers in thy mazy dance?
 Happy 't is when thy ruby lips part sweetly,
 And so remain because thou listenest : 10
 But thou to please wert nurtured so completely
 That I can never tell what mood is best.
 I shall as soon pronounce which grace more neatly
 Trips it before Apollo than the rest.

VII.

Solitude.

O SOLITUDE! if I must with thee dwell,
 Let it not be among the jumbled heap

Of murky buildings ; climb with me the steep, —
 Nature's observatory — whence the dell,
 Its flowery slopes, its river's crystal swell, 5
 May seem a span ; let me thy vigils keep
 'Mongst boughs pavilion'd, where the deer's swift leap
 Startles the wild bee from the foxglove bell.
 But though I'll gladly trace these scenes with thee,
 Yet the sweet converse of an innocent mind, 10
 Whose words are images of thoughts refin'd,
 Is my soul's pleasure ; and it sure must be
 Almost the highest bliss of human-kind,
 When to thy haunts two kindred spirits flee.

VIII.

Addressed to Haydon.

GREAT spirits now on earth are sojourning ;
 He of the cloud, the cataract, the lake,
 Who on Helvellyn's summit, wide awake,
 Catches his freshness from Archangel's wing :
 He of the rose, the violet, the spring, 5
 The social smile, the chain for Freedom's sake :
 And lo ! — whose steadfastness would never take
 A meaner sound than Raphael's whispering.
 And other spirits there are standing apart
 Upon the forehead of the age to come ; 10
 These, these will give the world another heart,
 And other pulses. Hear ye not the hum
 Of mighty workings ? —
 Listen awhile ye nations, and be dumb.

IX.

On the Grasshopper and Cricket.

THE poetry of earth is never dead :

When all the birds are faint with the hot sun,
 And hide in cooling trees, a voice will run
 From hedge to hedge about the new-mown mead ;
 That is the Grasshopper's — he takes the lead 5
 In summer luxury, — he has never done
 With his delights ; for when tired out with fun
 He rests at ease beneath some pleasant weed.

The poetry of earth is ceasing never :

On a lone winter evening, when the frost 10
 Has wrought a silence, from the stove there shrills
 The Cricket's song, in warmth increasing ever,
 And seems to one in drowsiness half lost,
 The Grasshopper's among some grassy hills.

December 30, 1816.

X.

As from the darkening gloom a silver dove
 Upsoars, and darts into the eastern light,
 On pinions that naught moves but pure delight,
 So fled thy soul into the realms above,
 Regions of peace and everlasting love ; 5
 Where happy spirits, crown'd with circlets bright
 Of starry beam, and gloriously bedight,
 Taste the high joy none but the blest can prove.
 There thou or joinest the immortal quire
 In melodies that even heaven fair 10
 Fill with superior bliss, or, at desire,
 Of the omnipotent Father, clear'st the air
 On holy message sent — What pleasure's higher ?
 Wherefore does any grief our joy impair ?

XI.

*Written on a Blank Space at the end of Chaucer's Tale of
"The Floure and the Lefe."*

THIS pleasant tale is like a little copse :
 The honied lines so freshly interlace
 To keep the reader in so sweet a place,
 So that he here and there full-hearted stops ;
 And oftentimes he feels the dewy drops 5
 Come cool and suddenly against his face,
 And by the wandering melody may trace
 Which way the tender-legged linnet hops.
 Oh, what a power has white simplicity !
 What mighty power has this gentle story ! 10
 I that do ever feel a thirst for glory,
 Could at this moment be content to lie
 Meekly upon the grass, as those whose sobbings
 Were heard of none beside the mournful robins.

XII.

On the Sea.

IT keeps eternal whisperings around
 Desolate shores, and with its mighty swell
 Gluts twice ten thousand caverns, till the spell
 Of Hecate leaves them their old shadowy sound.
 Often 't is in such gentle temper found 5
 That scarcely will the very smallest shell
 Be mov'd for days from whence it sometime fell,
 When last the winds of heaven were unbound.
 Oh, ye, who have your eye-balls vex'd and tir'd,
 Feast them upon the wideness of the sea ; 10

O, ye, whose ears are dinn'd with uproar rude,
 Or fed too much with cloying melody. —
 Sit ye near some old cavern's mouth, and brood
 Until ye start, as if the sea-nymphs quir'd!

XIII.

To Homer.

STANDING aloof in giant ignorance,
 Of thee I hear and of the Cyclades,
 As one who sits ashore and longs perchance
 To visit dolphin-corals in deep seas.
 So thou wast blind; but then the veil was rent, 5
 For Jove uncurtain'd Heaven to let thee live,
 And Neptune made for thee a spumy tent,
 And Pan made sing for thee his forest-hive;
 Aye on the shores of darkness there is light,
 And precipices show untrodden green, 10
 There is a budding morrow in midnight,
 There is a triple sight in blindness keen;
 Such seeing hadst thou, as it once befel
 To Dian, Queen of Earth, and Heaven and Hell.

XIV.

To a Lady Seen for a few Moments at Vauxhall.

TIME's sea hath been five years at its slow ebb,
 Long hours have to and fro let creep the sand,
 Since I was tangled in thy beauty's web,
 And snared by the ungloving of thine hand.
 And yet I never look on midnight sky 5
 But I behold thine eyes' well-memory'd light;
 I cannot look upon the rose's dye
 But to thy cheek my soul doth take its flight;

I cannot look on any budding flower
 But my fond ear, in fancy at thy lips 10
 And harkening for a love-sound, doth devour
 Its sweets in the wrong sense. Thou dost eclipse
 Every delight with sweet remembering,
 And grief unto my darling joys dost bring.

XV.

"When I have Fears."

WHEN I have fears that I may cease to be
 Before my pen has glean'd my teeming brain,
 Before high piled books, in charact'ry,
 Hold like rich garner's the full-ripen'd grain;
 When I behold, upon the night's starr'd face, 5
 Huge cloudy symbols of a high romance,
 And think that I may never live to trace
 Their shadows, with the magic hand of chance;
 And when I feel, fair creature of an hour!
 That I shall never look upon thee more, 10
 Never have relish in the faery power
 Of unreflecting love! — then on the shore
 Of the wide world I stand alone, and think
 Till love and fame to nothingness do sink.

XVI.

"Bright Star!"

BRIGHT star! would I were steadfast as thou art —
 Not in lone splendour hung aloft the night,
 And watching, with eternal lids apart,
 Like Nature's patient sleepless Eremite,
 The moving waters at their priestlike task 5
 Of pure ablution round earth's human shores,

Or gazing on the new soft fallen mask
Of snow upon the mountains and the moors —
No — yet still steadfast, still unchangeable,
Pillow'd upon my fair love's ripening breast,
To feel for ever its soft fall and swell,
Awake for ever in a sweet unrest,
Still, still to hear her tender-taken breath,
And so live ever — or else swoon to death.

[PUBLISHED 1818]

ENDYMION:

A POETIC ROMANCE.

THE STRETCHED METRE OF AN ANTIQUE SONG.

INSCRIBED TO THE MEMORY

OF

THOMAS CHATTERTON.

PREFACE.

KNOWING within myself the manner in which this Poem has been produced, it is not without a feeling of regret that I make it public.

What manner I mean, will be quite clear to the reader, who must soon perceive great inexperience, immaturity, and every error denoting a feverish attempt, rather than a deed accomplished. The two first books, and indeed the two last, I feel sensible are not of such completion as to warrant their passing the press; nor should they if I thought a year's castigation would do them any good;—it will not: the foundations are too sandy. It is just that this youngster should die away: a sad thought for me, if I had not some hope that while it is dwindling I may be plotting, and fitting myself for verses fit to live.

This may be speaking too presumptuously, and may deserve a punishment: but no feeling man will be forward to inflict it: he will leave me alone, with the conviction that there is not a fiercer hell than the failure in a great object. This is not written with the least atom of purpose to forestall criticisms of course, but from the desire I have to conciliate men who are competent to look, and who do look with a zealous eye, to the honour of English literature.

The imagination of a boy is healthy, and the mature imagination of a man is healthy; but there is a space of life between, in which the soul is in a ferment, the character undecided, the way of life uncertain, the ambition thick-sighted: thence proceeds mawkishness, and all the thousand bitters which those men I speak of must necessarily taste in going over the following pages.

I hope I have not in too late a day touched the beautiful mythology of Greece, and dulled its brightness: for I wish to try once more, before I bid it farewell.

TEIGNMOUTH, April 10, 1818.

ENDYMION.

BOOK I.

A THING of beauty is a joy for ever:
Its loveliness increases: it will never
Pass into nothingness: but still will keep
A bower quiet for us, and a sleep
Full of sweet dreams, and health, and quiet breathing. 5
Therefore, on every morrow, are we wreathing
A flowery band to bind us to the earth,
Spite of despondence, of the inhuman dearth
Of noble natures, of the gloomy days,
Of all the unhealthy and o'er-darkened ways 10
Made for our searching: yes, in spite of all,
Some shape of beauty moves away the pall
From our dark spirits. Such the sun, the moon,
Trees old and young, sprouting a shady boon
For simple sheep; and such are daffodils 15
With the green world they live in; and clear rills
That for themselves a cooling covert make
'Gainst the hot season; the mid forest brake,
Rich with a sprinkling of fair musk-rose blooms:
And such too is the grandeur of the dooms 20
We have imagined for the mighty dead;
All lovely tales that we have heard or read:
An endless fountain of immortal drink,
Pouring unto us from the heaven's brink.

Nor do we merely feel these essences 25
 For one short hour ; no, even as the trees
 That whisper round a temple become soon
 Dear as the temple's self, so does the moon,
 The passion poesy, glories infinite,
 Haunt us till they become a cheering light 30
 Unto our souls, and bound to us so fast,
 That, whether there be shine, or gloom o'ercast,
 They always must be with us, or we die.

Therefore, 't is with full happiness that I
 Will trace the story of Endymion. 35
 The very music of the name has gone
 Into my being, and each pleasant scene
 Is growing fresh before me as the green
 Of our own vallies : so I will begin
 Now while I cannot hear the city's din ; 40
 Now while the early budders are just new,
 And run in mazes of the youngest hue
 About old forests ; while the willow trails
 Its delicate amber ; and the dairy pails
 Bring home increase of milk. And, as the year 45
 Grows lush in juicy stalks, I'll smoothly steer
 My little boat, for many quiet hours,
 With streams that deepen freshly into bowers.
 Many and many a verse I hope to write,
 Before the daisies, vermeil rimm'd and white, 50
 Hide in deep herbage ; and ere yet the bees
 Hum about globes of clover and sweet peas,
 I must be near the middle of my story.
 O may no wintry season, bare and hoary,
 See it half finished : but let Autumn bold, 55
 With universal tinge of sober gold,
 Be all about me when I make an end.

And now, at once adventuresome, I send
 My herald thought into a wilderness:
 There let its trumpet blow, and quickly dress 60
 My uncertain path with green, that I may speed
 Easily onward, thorough flowers and weed.

Upon the sides of Latmos was outspread
 A mighty forest; for the moist earth fed
 So plenteously all weed-hidden roots 65
 Into o'er-hanging boughs, and precious fruits.
 And it had gloomy shades, sequestered deep,
 Where no man went; and if from shepherd's keep
 A lamb strayed far a-down those inmost glens,
 Never again saw he the happy pens 70
 Whither his brethren, bleating with content,
 Over the hills at every nightfall went.
 Among the shepherds, 't was believed ever,
 That not one fleecy lamb which thus did sever
 From the white flock, but pass'd unworried 75
 By angry wolf, or pard with prying head,
 Until it came to some unfooted plains
 Where fed the herds of Pan: ay great his gains
 Who thus one lamb did lose. Paths there were many,
 Winding through palmy fern, and rushes fenny, 80
 And ivy banks; all leading pleasantly
 To a wide lawn, whence one could only see
 Stems thronging all around between the swell
 Of turf and slanting branches: who could tell
 The freshness of the space of heaven above, 85
 Edg'd round with dark tree tops? through which a dove
 Would often beat its wings, and often too
 A little cloud would move across the blue.

Full in the middle of this pleasantness
 There stood a marble altar, with a tress 90

Of flowers budded newly ; and the dew
 Had taken fairy phantasies to strew
 Daisies upon the sacred sward last eve,
 And so the dawned light in pomp receive.
 For 't was the morn: Apollo's upward fire 95
 Made every eastern cloud a silvery pyre
 Of brightness so unsullied, that therein
 A melancholy spirit well might win
 Oblivion, and melt out his essence fine
 Into the winds: rain-scented eglantine 100
 Gave temperate sweets to that well-wooing sun ;
 The lark was lost in him; cold springs had run
 To warm their chilliest bubbles in the grass;
 Man's voice was on the mountains; and the mass
 Of nature's lives and wonders puls'd tenfold, 105
 To feel this sun-rise and its glories old.

Now while the silent workings of the dawn
 Were busiest, into that self-same lawn
 All suddenly, with joyful cries, there sped
 A troop of little children garlanded ; 110
 Who gathering round the altar, seem'd to pry
 Earnestly round as wishing to espy
 Some folk of holiday : nor had they waited
 For many moments, ere their ears were sated
 With a faint breath of music, which ev'n then 115
 Fill'd out its voice, and died away again.
 Within a little space again it gave
 Its airy swellings, with a gentle wave,
 To light-hung leaves, in smoothest echoes breaking
 Through copse-clad vallies, — ere their death, o'ertaking 120
 The surgy murmurs of the lonely sea.

And now, as deep into the wood as we
 Might mark a lynx's eye, there glimmered light

Fair faces and a rush of garments white,
 Plainer and plainer shewing, till at last 125
 Into the widest alley they all past,
 Making directly for the woodland altar.
 O kindly muse ! let not my weak tongue falter,
 In telling of this goodly company,
 Of their old piety, and of their glee : 130
 But let a portion of ethereal dew
 Fall on my head, and presently unmew
 My soul; that I may dare, in wayfaring,
 To stammer where old Chaucer used to sing.

Leading the way, young damsels danced along, 135
 Bearing the burden of a shepherd song :
 Each having a white wicker over brimm'd
 With April's tender younglings: next, well trimm'd,
 A crowd of shepherds with as sunburnt looks
 As may be read of in Arcadian books; 140
 Such as sat listening round Apollo's pipe,
 When the great deity, for earth too ripe,
 Let his divinity o'er-flowing die
 In music, through the vales of Thessaly :
 Some idly trailed their sheep-hooks on the ground, 145
 And some kept up a shrilly mellow sound
 With ebon-tipped flutes: close after these,
 Now coming from beneath the forest trees,
 A venerable priest full soberly,
 Begirt with minist'ring looks : always his eye 150
 Steadfast upon the matted turf he kept,
 And after him his sacred vestments swept.
 From his right hand there swung a vase, milk-white,
 Of mingled wine, out-sparkling generous light :
 And in his left he held a basket full 155
 Of all sweet herbs that searching eye could cull :

Wild thyme, and valley-lilies whiter still
 Than Leda's love, and cresses from the rill.
 His aged head, crowned with beechen wreath,
 Seem'd like a poll of ivy in the teeth 160
 Of winter hoar. Then came another crowd
 Of shepherds, lifting in due time aloud
 Their share of the ditty. After them appear'd,
 Up-followed by a multitude that rear'd
 Their voices to the clouds, a fair wrought car, 165
 Easily rolling so as scarce to mar
 The freedom of three steeds of dapple brown :
 Who stood therein did seem of great renown
 Among the throng. His youth was fully blown,
 Shewing like Ganymede to manhood grown : 170
 And, for those simple times, his garments were
 A chieftain king's : beneath his breast, half bare,
 Was hung a silver bugle, and between
 His nervy knees there lay a boar-spear keen.
 A smile was on his countenance ; he seem'd, 175
 To common lookers on, like one who dream'd
 Of idleness in groves Elysian :
 But there were some who feelingly could scan
 A lurking trouble in his nether lip,
 And see that oftentimes the reins would slip 180
 Through his forgotten hands : then would they sigh,
 And think of yellow leaves, of owlet's cry,
 Of logs piled solemnly. — Ah, well-a-day,
 Why should our young Endymion pine away !

 Soon the assembly, in a circle rang'd 185
 Stood silent round the shrine : each look was chang'd
 To sudden veneration : women meek
 Beckon'd their sons to silence ; while each cheek
 Of virgin bloom pal'd gently for slight fear.
 Endymion too, without a forest peer, 190

Stood, wan, and pale, and with an awed face,
 Among his brothers of the mountain chase.
 In midst of all, the venerable priest
 Eyed them with joy from greatest to the least,
 And, after lifting up his aged hands, 195
 Thus spake he : “ Men of Latmos ! shepherd bands !
 Whose care it is to guard a thousand flocks :
 Whether descended from beneath the rocks
 That overtop your mountains ; whether come
 From vallies where the pipe is never dumb ; 200
 Or from your swelling downs, where sweet air stirs
 Blue hare-bells lightly, and where prickly furze
 Buds lavish gold ; or ye, whose precious charge
 Nibble their fill at ocean’s very marge,
 Whose mellow reeds are touch’d with sounds forlorn 205
 By the dim echoes of old Triton’s horn :
 Mothers and wives ! who day by day prepare
 The scrip, with needments, for the mountain air ;
 And all ye gentle girls who foster up
 Udderless lambs, and in a little cup 210
 Will put choice honey for a favour’d youth :
 Yea, every one attend ! for in good truth
 Our vows are wanting to our great god Pan.
 Are not our lowing heifers sleeker than
 Night-swollen mushrooms ? Are not our wide plains 215
 Speckled with countless fleeces ? Have not rains
 Green’d over April’s lap ? No howling sad
 Sickens our fearful ewes ; and we have had
 Great bounty from Endymion our lord.
 The earth is glad : the merry lark has pour’d 220
 His early song against yon breezy sky,
 That spreads so clear o’er our solemnity.”

Thus ending, on the shrine he heap’d a spire
 Of teeming sweets, enkindling sacred fire.

Anon he stain'd the thick and spongy sod 225
 With wine, in honour of the shepherd god.
 Now while the earth was drinking it, and while
 Bay leaves were crackling in the fragrant pile,
 And gummy frankincense was sparkling bright
 'Neath smothering parsley, and a hazy light 230
 Spread greyly eastward, thus a chorus sang :

“ O THOU, whose mighty palace roof doth hang
 From jagged trunks, and overshadoweth
 Eternal whispers, glooms, the birth, life, death
 Of unseen flowers in heavy peacefulness ; 235
 Who lov'st to see the hamadryads dress
 Their ruffled locks where meeting hazels darken :
 And through whole solemn hours dost sit, and hearken
 The dreary melody of bedded reeds —
 In desolate places, where dank moisture breeds 240
 The pipy hemlock to strange overgrowth ;
 Bethinking thee, how melancholy loth
 Thou wast to lose fair Syrinx — do thou now,
 By thy love's milky brow !
 By all the trembling mazes that she ran, 245
 Hear us, great Pan !

“ O thou, for whose soul-soothing quiet, turtles
 Passion their voices cooingly 'mong myrtles,
 What time thou wanderest at eventide
 Through sunny meadows, that outskirt the side 250
 Of thine enmossed realms : O thou, to whom
 Broad leaved fig trees even now foredoom
 Their ripen'd fruitage ; yellow girted bees
 Their golden honeycombs ; our village leas
 Their fairest-blossom'd beans and poppied corn ; 255
 The chuckling linnnet its five young unborn,

To sing for thee ; low creeping strawberries
 Their summer coolness ; pent up butterflies
 Their freckled wings ; yea, the fresh budding year
 All its completions — be quickly near, 260
 By every wind that nods the mountain pine,
 O forester divine !

“ Thou, to whom every faun and satyr flies
 For willing service ; whether to surprise
 The squatted hare while in half sleeping fit ; 265
 Or upward ragged precipices flit
 To save poor lambkins from the eagle’s maw ;
 Or by mysterious enticement draw
 Bewildered shepherds to their path again ;
 Or to tread breathless round the frothy main, 270
 And gather up all fancifullest shells
 For thee to tumble into Naiads’ cells,
 And, being hidden, laugh at their out-peeping ;
 Or to delight thee with fantastic leaping,
 The while they pelt each other on the crown 275
 With silvery oak apples, and fir cones brown —
 By all the echoes that about thee ring,
 Hear us, O satyr king !

“ O Hearer to the loud clapping shears,
 While ever and anon to his shorn peers 280
 A ram goes bleating : Winder of the horn,
 When snouted wild-boars routing tender corn
 Anger our huntsmen : Breather round our farms,
 To keep off mildews, and all weather harms :
 Strange ministrant of undescribed sounds, 285
 That come a-swooning over hollow grounds,
 And wither drearily on barren moors :
 Dread opener of the mysterious doors

Leading to universal knowledge — see,
 Great son of Dryope, 290
 The many that are come to pay their vows
 With leaves about their brows !

“ Be still the unimaginable lodge
 For solitary thinkings ; such as dodge
 Conception to the very bourne of heaven, 295
 Then leave the naked brain : be still the leaven,
 That spreading in this dull and clodded earth
 Gives it a touch ethereal — a new birth :
 Be still a symbol of immensity ;
 A firmament reflected in a sea ; 300
 An element filling the space between ;
 An unknown — but no more : we humbly screen
 With uplift hands our foreheads, lowly bending,
 And giving out a shout most heaven rending,
 Conjure thee to receive our humble Pæan, 305
 Upon thy Mount Lycean ! ”

Even while they brought the burden to a close,
 A shout from the whole multitude arose,
 That lingered in the air like dying rolls
 Of abrupt thunder, when Ionian shoals 310
 Of dolphins bob their noses through the brine.
 Meantime, on shady levels, mossy fine,
 Young companies nimbly began dancing
 To the swift treble pipe, and humming string.
 Aye, those fair living forms swam heavenly 315
 To tunes forgotten — out of memory :
 Fair creatures ! whose young children’s children bred
 Thermopylæ its heroes — not yet dead,
 But in old marbles ever beautiful.
 High genitors, unconscious did they cull 320

Time's sweet first-fruits — they danc'd to weariness,
 And then in quiet circles did they press
 'The hillock turf, and caught the latter end
 Of some strange history, potent to send
 A young mind from its bodily tenement. 325
 Or they might watch the quoit-pitchers, intent
 On either side : pitying the sad death
 Of Hyacinthus, when the cruel breath
 Of Zephyr slew him, — Zephyr penitent,
 Who now, ere Phœbus mounts the firmament, 330
 Fondles the flower amid the sobbing rain.
 The archers too, upon a wider plain,
 Beside the feathery whizzing of the shaft.
 And the dull twanging bowstring, and the raft
 Branch down sweeping from a tall ash top, 335
 Call'd up a thousand thoughts to envelope
 Those who would watch. Perhaps, the trembling knee
 And frantic gape of lonely Niobe,
 Poor, lonely Niobe ! when her lovely young
 Were dead and gone, and her caressing tongue 340
 Lay a lost thing upon her paly lip.
 And very, very deadliness did nip
 Her motherly cheeks. Arous'd from this sad mood
 By one, who at a distance loud halloo'd,
 Uplifting his strong bow into the air, 345
 Many might after brighter visions stare :
 After the Argonauts, in blind amaze
 Tossing about on Neptune's restless ways,
 Until, from the horizon's vaulted side,
 There shot a golden splendour far and wide, 350
 Spangling those million poutings of the brine
 With quivering ore : 't was even an awful shine
 From the exaltation of Apollo's bow ;
 A heavenly beacon in their dreary woe.

Who thus were ripe for high contemplating, 355
 Might turn their steps towards the sober ring
 Where sat Endymion and the aged priest
 'Mong shepherds' gone in eld, whose looks increas'd
 The silvery setting of their mortal star.
 There they discours'd upon the fragile bar 360
 That keeps us from our homes ethereal ;
 And what our duties there : to nightly call
 Vesper, the beauty-crest of summer weather ;
 To summon all the downiest clouds together
 For the sun's purple couch ; to emulate 365
 In ministring the potent rule of fate
 With speed of fire-tailed exhalations ;
 To tint her pallid cheek with bloom, who cons
 Sweet poesy by moonlight : besides these,
 A world of other unguess'd offices. 370
 Anon they wander'd, by divine converse,
 Into Elysium : vieing to rehearse
 Each one his own anticipated bliss.
 One felt heart-certain that he could not miss
 His quick gone love, among fair blossom'd boughs, 375
 Where every zephyr-sigh pouts, and endows
 Her lips with music for the welcoming.
 Another wish'd, 'mid that eternal spring,
 To meet his rosy child, with feathery sails,
 Sweeping, eye-earnestly, through almond vales : 380
 Who, suddenly, should stoop through the smooth wind.
 And with the balmiest leaves his temples bind :
 And, ever after, through those regions be
 His messenger, his little Mercury.
 Some were athirst in soul to see again 385
 Their fellow huntsmen o'er the wide champaign
 In times long past : to sit with them, and talk
 Of all the chances in their earthly walk ;

Comparing, joyfully, their plenteous stores
 Of happiness, to when upon the moors, 390
 Benighted, close they huddled from the cold,
 And shar'd their famish'd scrips. Thus all out-told
 Their fond imaginations, — saving him
 Whose eyelids curtain'd up their jewels dim,
 Endymion : yet hourly had he striven 395
 To hide the cankering venom, that had riven
 His fainting recollections. Now indeed
 His senses had swoon'd off : he did not heed
 The sudden silence, or the whispers low,
 Or the old eyes dissolving at his woe, 400
 Or anxious calls, or close of trembling palms,
 Or maiden's sigh, that grief itself embalms :
 But in the self-same fixed trance he kept.
 Like one who on the earth had never stept.
 Aye, even as dead-still as a marble man, 405
 Frozen in that old tale Arabian.

Who whispers him so pantingly and close?
 Peona, his sweet sister, of all those,
 His friends, the dearest. Hushing signs she made,
 And breath'd a sister's sorrow to persuade 410
 A yielding up, a cradling on her care,
 Her eloquence did breathe away the curse :
 She led him, like some midnight spirit nurse
 Of happy changes in emphatic dreams,
 Along a path between two little streams. — 415
 Guarding his forehead, with her round elbow,
 From low-grown branches, and his footsteps slow
 From stumbling over stumps and hillocks small ;
 Until they came to where these streamlets fall,
 With mingled bubblings and a gentle rush, 420
 Into a river, clear, brimful, and flush

With crystal mocking of the trees and sky.
 A little shallop, floating there hard by,
 Pointed its beak over the fringed bank ;
 And soon it lightly dipt, and rose, and sank, 425
 And dipt again, with the young couple's weight, —
 Peona guiding, through the water straight,
 Towards a bowery island opposite ;
 Which gaining presently, she steered light
 Into a shady, fresh, and ripply cove, 430
 Where nested was an arbour, overwove
 By many a summer's silent fingering ;
 To whose cool bosom she was us'd to bring
 Her playmates, with their needle broidery,
 And minstrel memories of times gone by. 435

So she was gently glad to see him laid
 Under her favourite bower's quiet shade,
 On her own couch, new made of flower leaves,
 Dried carefully on the cooler side of sheaves
 When last the sun his autumn tresses shook, 440
 And the tann'd harvesters rich armfuls took.
 Soon was he quieted to slumbrous rest :
 But, ere it crept upon him, he had prest
 Peona's busy hand against his lips,
 And still, a-sleeping, held her finger-tips 445
 In tender pressure. And as a willow keeps
 A patient watch over the stream that creeps
 Windingly by it, so the quiet maid
 Held her in peace : so that a whispering blade
 Of grass, a wailful gnat, a bee bustling 450
 Down in the bluebells, or a wren light rustling
 Among seer leaves and twigs, might all be heard.

O magic sleep ! O comfortable bird,
 That broodest o'er the troubled sea of the mind

Fill it is hush'd and smooth ! O unconfin'd 455
 Restraint ! imprison'd liberty ! great key
 To golden palaces, strange minstrelsy,
 Fountains grotesque, new trees, bespangled caves,
 Echoing grottos, full of tumbling waves
 And moonlight; aye, to all the mazy world 460
 Of silvery enchantment ! — who, upfurl'd
 Beneath thy drowsy wing a triple hour,
 But renovates and lives ? — Thus, in the bower,
 Endymion was calm'd to life again.
 Opening his eyelids with a healthier brain, 465
 He said: " I feel this thine endearing love
 All through my bosom: thou art as a dove
 Trembling its closed eyes and sleeked wings
 About me ; and the pearliest dew not brings
 Such morning incense from the fields of May, 470
 As do those brighter drops that twinkling stray
 From those kind eyes, the very home and haunt
 Of sisterly affection. Can I want
 Aught else, aught nearer heaven, than such tears ?
 Yet dry them up, in bidding hence all fears 475
 That, any longer, I will pass my days
 Alone and sad. No, I will once more raise
 My voice upon the mountain-heights ; once more
 Make my horn parley from their foreheads hoar :
 Again my trooping hounds their tongues shall loll 480
 Around the breathed boar: again I'll poll
 The fair-grown yew tree, for a chosen bow :
 And, when the pleasant sun is getting low,
 Again I'll linger in a sloping mead
 To hear the speckled thrushes, and see feed 485
 Our idle sheep. So be thou cheered, sweet,
 And, if thy lute is here, softly intreat
 My soul to keep in its resolved course."

Hereat Peona, in their silver source,
 Shut her pure sorrow drops with glad exclaim, 490
 And took a lute, from which there pulsing came
 A lively prelude, fashioning the way
 In which her voice should wander. 'T was a lay
 More subtle cadenced, more forest wild
 Than Dryope's lone lulling of her child ; 495
 And nothing since has floated in the air
 So mournful strange. Surely some influence rare
 Went, spiritual, through the damsel's hand ;
 For still, with Delphic emphasis, she spann'd
 The quick invisible strings, even though she saw 500
 Endymion's spirit melt away and thaw
 Before the deep intoxication.
 But soon she came, with sudden burst, upon
 Her self-possession — swung the lute aside,
 And earnestly said : " Brother, 't is vain to hide 505
 That thou dost know of things mysterious,
 Immortal, starry ; such alone could thus
 Weigh down thy nature. Hast thou sinn'd in aught
 Offensive to the heavenly powers ? Caught
 A Paphian dove upon a message sent ? 510
 Thy deathful bow against some deer-herd bent,
 Sacred to Dian ? Haply, thou hast seen
 Her naked limbs among the alders green ;
 And that, alas ! is death. No, I can trace
 Something more high perplexing in thy face ! " 515

Endymion look'd at her, and press'd her hand,
 And said : " Art thou so pale, who wast so bland
 And merry in our meadows ? How is this ?
 Tell me thine ailment : tell me all amiss ! —
 Ah ! thou hast been unhappy at the change 520
 Wrought suddenly in me. What indeed more strange ?

Or more complete to overwhelm surmise?
 Ambition is no sluggard: 't is no prize,
 That toiling years would put within my grasp,
 That I have sigh'd for : with so deadly gasp 535
 No man e'er panted for a mortal love.
 So all have set my heavier grief above
 These things which happen. Rightly have they done:
 I, who still saw the horizontal sun
 Heave his broad shoulder o'er the edge of the world, 539
 Out-facing Lucifer, and then had hurl'd
 My spear aloft, as signal for the chase —
 I, who, for very sport of heart, would race
 With my own steed from Araby ; pluck down
 A vulture from his towery perching ; frown 535
 A lion into growling, loth retire —
 To lose, at once, all my toil-breeding fire,
 And sink thus low ! but I will ease my breast
 Of secret grief, here in this bowery nest.

“ This river does not see the naked sky, 540
 Till it begins to progress silverly
 Around the western border of the wood,
 Whence, from a certain spot, its winding flood
 Seems at the distance like a crescent moon:
 And in that nook, the very pride of June, 545
 Had I been us'd to pass my weary eyes;
 The rather for the sun unwilling leaves
 So dear a picture of his sovereign power,
 And I could witness his most kingly hour,
 When he doth tighten up the golden reins, 550
 And paces leisurely down amber plains
 His snorting four. Now when his chariot last
 Its beams against the zodiac-lion cast,
 There blossom'd suddenly a magic bed
 Of sacred ditamy, and poppies red : 555

At which I wondered greatly, knowing well
 That but one night had wrought this flowery spell,
 And, sitting down close by, began to muse
 What it might mean. Perhaps, thought I, Morpheus,
 In passing here, his owlet pinions shook ; 560
 Or, it may be, ere matron Night uptook
 Her ebon urn, young Mercury, by stealth,
 Had dipt his rod in it : such garland wealth
 Came not by common growth. Thus on I thought,
 Until my head was dizzy and distraught. 565
 Moreover, through the dancing poppies stole
 A breeze, most softly lulling to my soul ;
 And shaping visions all about my sight
 Of colours, wings, and bursts of spangly light ;
 The which became more strange, and strange, and dim, 570
 And then were gulf'd in a tumultuous swim:
 And then I fell asleep. Ah, can I tell
 The enchantment that afterwards befell ?
 Yet it was but a dream : yet such a dream
 That never tongue, although it overteem 575
 With mellow utterance, like a cavern spring,
 Could figure out and to conception bring
 All I beheld and felt. Methought I lay
 Watching the zenith, where the milky way
 Among the stars in virgin splendour pours ; 580
 And travelling my eye, until the doors
 Of heaven appear'd to open for my flight,
 I became loth and fearful to alight
 From such high soaring by a downward glance :
 So kept me steadfast in that airy trance, 585
 Spreading imaginary pinions wide.
 When, presently, the stars began to glide,
 And faint away, before my eager view :
 At which I sigh'd that I could not pursue,

And dropt my vision to the horizon's verge; 590
 And lo! from opening clouds, I saw emerge
 The loveliest moon that ever silver'd o'er
 A shell for Neptune's goblet: she did soar
 So passionately bright, my dazzled soul
 Commingling with her argent spheres did roll 595
 Through clear and cloudy, even when she went
 At last into a dark and vapoury tent —
 Whereat, methought, the lidless-eyed train
 Of planets all were in the blue again.
 To commune with those orbs, once more I rais'd 600
 My sight right upward: but it was quite dazed
 By a bright something, sailing down apace,
 Making me quickly veil my eyes and face:
 Again I look'd, and, O ye deities,
 Who from Olympus watch our destinies! 605
 Whence that completed form of all completeness?
 Whence came that high perfection of all sweetness?
 Speak, stubborn earth, and tell me where, O where
 Hast thou a symbol of her golden hair?
 Not oat-sheaves drooping in the western sun; 610
 Not — thy soft hand, fair sister! let me shun
 Such follying before thee — yet she had,
 Indeed, locks bright enough to make me mad;
 And they were simply gordian'd up and braided,
 Leaving, in naked comeliness, unshaded, 615
 Her pearl round ears, white neck, and orb'd brow;
 The which were blended in, I know not how,
 With such a paradise of lips and eyes,
 Blush-tinted cheeks, half smiles, and faintest sighs,
 That, when I think thereon, my spirit clings 620
 And plays about its fancy, till the stings
 Of human neighbourhood envenom all.
 Unto what awful power shall I call?

To what high fane? — Ah! see her hovering feet,
 More bluely vein'd, more soft, more whitely sweet 625
 Than those of sea-born Venus, when she rose
 From out her cradle shell. The wind out-blows
 Her scarf into a fluttering pavilion;
 'T is blue, and over-spangled with a million
 Of little eyes, as though thou wert to shed 630
 Over the darkest, lushest bluebell bed,
 Handfuls of daisies." — "Endymion, how strange!
 Dream within dream!" — "She took an airy range,
 And then, towards me, like a very maid,
 Came blushing, waning, willing, and afraid, 635
 And press'd me by the hand: Ah! 't was too much;
 Methought I fainted at the charmed touch,
 Yet held my recollection, even as one
 Who dives three fathoms where the waters run
 Gurgling in beds of coral: for anon, 640
 I felt upmounted in that region
 Where falling stars dart their artillery forth,
 And eagles struggle with the buffeting north
 That balances the heavy meteor-stone; —
 Felt too, I was not fearful, nor alone, 645
 But lapp'd and lull'd along the dangerous sky.
 Soon, as it seem'd, we left our journeying high,
 And straightway into frightful eddies swoop'd;
 Such as ay muster where grey time has scoop'd
 Huge dens and caverns in a mountain's side: 650
 There hollow sounds arous'd me, and I sigh'd
 To faint once more by looking on my bliss —
 I was distracted; madly did I kiss
 The wooing arms which held me, and did give
 My eyes at once to death: but 't was to live, 655
 To take in draughts of life from the gold fount
 Of kind and passionate looks; to count, and count

The moments, by some greedy help that seem'd
 A second self, that each might be redeem'd
 And plunder'd of its load of blessedness. 660
 Ah, desperate mortal ! I e'en dar'd to press
 Her very cheek against my crowned lip,
 And, at that moment, felt my body dip
 Into a warmer air: a moment more,
 Our feet were soft in flowers. There was store 665
 Of newest joys upon that alp. Sometimes
 A scent of violets, and blossoming limes,
 Loiter'd around us ; then of honey cells,
 Made delicate from all white-flower bells ;
 And once, above the edges of our nest, 670
 An arch face peep'd, — an Oread as I guess'd.

“ Why did I dream that sleep o'erpower'd me
 In midst of all this heaven ? Why not see,
 Far off, the shadows of his pinions dark,
 And stare them from me ? But no, like a spark 675
 That needs must die, although its little beam
 Reflects upon a diamond, my sweet dream
 Fell into nothing — into stupid sleep.
 And so it was, until a gentle creep,
 A careful moving caught my waking ears, 680
 And up I started: Ah ! my sighs, my tears,
 My clenched hands ; — for lo ! the poppies hung
 Dew-dabbled on their stalks, the ouzel sung
 A heavy ditty, and the sullen day
 Had chidden herald Hesperus away, 685
 With leaden looks : the solitary breeze
 Bluster'd, and slept, and its wild self did tease
 With wayward melancholy ; and I thought,
 Mark me, Peona ! that sometimes it brought
 Faint fare-thee-wells, and sigh-shrilled adieus ! — 690
 Away I wander'd — all the pleasant hues

Of heaven and earth had faded : deepest shades
 Were deepest dungeons; heaths and sunny glades
 Were full of pestilent light ; our taintless rills
 Seem'd sooty, and o'er-spread with upturn'd gills 695
 Of dying fish; the vermeil rose had blown
 In frightful scarlet, and its thorns out-grown
 Like spiked aloe. If an innocent bird
 Before my heedless footsteps stirr'd, and stirr'd
 In little journeys, I beheld in it 700
 A disguis'd demon, missioned to knit
 My soul with under darkness; to entice
 My stumblings down some monstrous precipice :
 Therefore I eager followed, and did curse
 The disappointment. Time, that aged nurse, 705
 Rock'd me to patience. Now, thank gentle heaven !
 These things, with all their comfortings, are given
 To my down-sunken hours, and with thee,
 Sweet sister, help to stem the ebbing sea
 Of weary life."

Thus ended he, and both 710
 Sat silent : for the maid was very loth
 To answer ; feeling well that breathed words
 Would all be lost, unheard, and vain as swords
 Against the enchased crocodile, or leaps
 Of grasshoppers against the sun. She weeps, 715
 And wonders; struggles to devise some blame;
 To put on such a look as would say, *Shame*
On this poor weakness! but, for all her strife,
 She could as soon have crush'd away the life
 From a sick dove. At length, to break the pause, 720
 She said with trembling chance : "Is this the cause?
 This all? Yet it is strange, and sad, alas !
 That one who through this middle earth should pass
 Most like a sojourning demi-god, and leave

His name upon the harp-string, should achieve 725
 No higher bard than simple maidenhood,
 Singing alone, and fearfully,— how the blood
 Left his young cheek ; and how he used to stray
 He knew not where ; and how he would say, *ναυ*,
 If any said 't was love : and yet 't was love ; 730
 What could it be but love ? How a ring-dove
 Let fall a sprig of yew tree in his path ;
 And how he died : and then, that love doth scathe
 The gentle heart, as northern blasts do roses ;
 And then the ballad of his sad life closes 735
 With sighs, and an alas ! — Endymion !
 Be rather in the trumpet's mouth, — anon
 Among the winds at large — that all may hearken !
 Although, before the crystal heavens darken,
 I watch and dote upon the silver lakes 740
 Pictur'd in western cloudiness, that takes
 The semblance of gold rocks and bright gold sands,
 Islands, and creeks, and amber-fretted strands
 With horses prancing o'er them, palaces
 And towers of amethyst, — would I so tease 745
 My pleasant days, because I could not mount
 Into those regions ? The Morphean fount
 Of that fine element that visions, dreams,
 And fitful whims of sleep are made of, streams
 Into its airy channels with so subtle, 750
 So thin a breathing, not the spider's shuttle,
 Circled a million times within the space
 Of a swallow's nest-door, could delay a trace,
 A tinting of its quality : how light
 Must dreams themselves be ; seeing they're more slight 755
 Than the mere nothing that engenders them !
 Then wherefore sully the entrusted gem
 Of high and noble life with thoughts so sick ?

Why pierce high-fronted honour to the quick
 For nothing but a dream ? " Hereat the youth 760
 Look'd up : a conflicting of shame and ruth
 Was in his plaited brow : yet his eyelids
 Widened a little, as when Zephyr bids
 A little breeze to creep between the fans
 Of careless butterflies : amid his pains 765
 He seem'd to taste a drop of manna-dew,
 Full palatable ; and a colour grew
 Upon his cheek, while thus he lifeful spake.

" Peona ! ever have I long'd to slake
 My thirst for the world's praises : nothing base, 770
 No merely slumberous phantasm, could unlace
 The stubborn canvas for my voyage prepar'd —
 Though now 't is tatter'd ; leaving my bark bar'd
 And sullenly drifting : yet my higher hope
 Is of too wide, too rainbow-large a scope, 775
 To fret at myriads of earthly wrecks.
 Wherein lies happiness ? In that which becks
 Our ready minds to fellowship divine,
 A fellowship with essence ; till we shine,
 Full alchemiz'd, and free of space. Behold 780
 The clear religion of heaven ! Fold
 A rose leaf round thy finger's taperness,
 And soothe thy lips : hist, when the airy stress
 Of music's kiss impregnates the free winds,
 And with a sympathetic touch unbinds 785
 Eolian magic from their lucid wombs :
 Then old songs waken from enclouded tombs ;
 Old ditties sigh above their father's grave ;
 Ghosts of melodious prophecyings rave
 Round every spot where trod Apollo's foot ; 790
 Bronze clarions awake, and faintly bruit,

Where long ago a giant battle was ;
 And, from the turf, a lullaby doth pass
 In every place where infant Orpheus slept.
 Feel we these things ? — that moment have we stept 795
 Into a sort of oneness, and our state
 Is like a floating spirit's. But there are
 Richer entanglements, enthralmments far
 More self-destroying, leading, by degrees,
 To the chief intensity : the crown of these 800
 Is made of love and friendship, and sits high
 Upon the forehead of humanity.
 All its more ponderous and bulky worth
 Is friendship, whence there ever issues forth
 A steady splendour ; but at the tip-top. 805
 There hangs by unseen film, an orb'd drop
 Of light, and that is love : its influence,
 Thrown in our eyes, genders a novel sense,
 At which we start and fret ; till in the end,
 Melting into its radiance, we blend, 810
 Mingle, and so become a part of it, —
 Nor with aught else can our souls interknit
 So wingedly : when we combine therewith,
 Life's self is nourish'd by its proper pith,
 And we are nurtur'd like a pelican brood. 815
 Aye, so delicious is the unsating food,
 That men, who might have tower'd in the van
 Of all the congregated world, to fan
 And winnow from the coming step of time
 All chaff of custom, wipe away all slime 820
 Left by men-slugs and human serpentry,
 Have been content to let occasion die.
 Whilst they did sleep in love's elysium.
 And, truly, I would rather be struck dumb,
 Than speak against this ardent listlessness : 825

For I have ever thought that it might bless
 The world with benefits unknowingly ;
 As does the nightingale, upperched high,
 And cloister'd among cool and bunched leaves —
 She sings but to her love, nor e'er conceives 830
 How tiptoe Night holds back her dark-grey hood.
 Just so may love, although 't is understood
 The mere commingling of passionate breath,
 Produce more than our searching witnesseth :
 What I know not : but who, of men, can tell 835
 That flowers would bloom, or that green fruit would swell
 To melting pulp, that fish would have bright mail,
 The earth its dower of river, wood and vale,
 The meadows runnels, runnels pebble-stones,
 The seed its harvest, or the lute its tones, 840
 Tones ravishment, or ravishment its sweet,
 If human souls did never kiss and greet ?

“ Now, if this earthly love has power to make
 Men's being mortal, immortal ; to shake
 Ambition from their memories, and brim 845
 Their measure of content ; what merest whim,
 Seems all this poor endeavour after fame,
 To one, who keeps within his stedfast aim
 A love immortal, an immortal too.
 Look not so wilder'd ; for these things are true, 850
 And never can be born of atomies
 That buzz about our slumbers, like brain-flies,
 Leaving us fancy-sick. No, no, I 'm sure,
 My restless spirit never could endure
 To brood so long upon one luxury, 855
 Unless it did, though fearfully, espy
 A hope beyond the shadow of a dream.
 My sayings will the less obscured seem,

When I have told thee how my waking sight
 Has made me scruple whether that same night 860
 Was pass'd in dreaming. Harken, sweet Peona !
 Beyond the matron-temple of Latona,
 Which we should see but for these darkening boughs,
 Lies a deep hollow, from whose ragged brows
 Bushes and trees do lean all round athwart, 865
 And meet so nearly, that with wings outrought,
 And spreaded tail, a vulture could not glide
 Past them, but he must brush on every side.
 Some moulder'd steps lead into this cool cell,
 Far as the slabbed margin of a well, 870
 Whose patient level peeps its crystal eye
 Right upward, through the bushes, to the sky.
 Oft have I brought thee flowers, on their stalks set
 Like vestal primroses, but dark velvet
 Edges them round, and they have golden pits : 875
 'T was there I got them, from the gaps and slits
 In a mossy stone, that sometimes was my seat,
 When all above was faint with mid-day heat.
 And there in strife no burning thoughts to heed,
 I'd bubble up the water through a reed ; 880
 So reaching back to boyhood : make me ships
 Of moulted feathers, touchwood, alder chips,
 With leaves stuck in them ; and the Neptune be
 Of their petty ocean. Oftener, heavily,
 When love-lorn hours had left me less a child, 885
 I sat contemplating the figures wild
 Of o'er-head clouds melting the mirror through.
 Upon a day, while thus I watch'd, by flew
 A cloudy Cupid, with his bow and quiver ;
 So plainly character'd, no breeze would shiver 890
 The happy chance : so happy, I was fain
To follow it upon the open plain,

And, therefore, was just going ; when, behold !
 A wonder, fair as any I have told —
 The same bright face I tasted in my sleep, 895
 Smiling in the clear well. My heart did leap
 Through the cool depth. — It moved as if to flee —
 I started up, when lo ! refreshfully,
 There came upon my face, in plenteous showers,
 Dew-drops, and dewy buds, and leaves, and flowers, 900
 Wrapping all objects from my smothered sight,
 Bathing my spirit in a new delight.
 Aye, such a breathless honey-feel of bliss
 Alone preserved me from the drear abyss
 Of death, for the fair form had gone again. 905
 Pleasure is oft a visitant ; but pain
 Clings cruelly to us, like the gnawing sloth
 On the deer's tender haunches : late, and loth,
 'T is scar'd away by slow returning pleasure.
 How sickening, how dark the dreadful leisure 910
 Of weary days, made deeper exquisite
 By a fore-knowledge of unslumbrous night !
 Like sorrow came upon me, heavier still,
 Than when I wander'd from the poppy hill :
 And a whole age of lingering moments crept 915
 Sluggishly by, ere more contentment swept
 Away at once the deadly yellow spleen.
 Yes, thrice have I this fair enchantment seen ;
 Once more been tortured with renewed life.
 When last the wintry gusts gave over strife 920
 With the conquering sun of spring, and left the skies
 Warm and serene, but yet with moisten'd eyes
 In pity of the shatter'd infant buds, —
 That time thou didst adorn, with amber studs,
 My hunting cap, because I laugh'd and smil'd, 925
 Chatted with thee, and many days exil'd

All torment from my breast ; — 't was even then,
 Straying about, yet, coop'd up in the den
 Of helpless discontent, — hurling my lance
 From place to place, and following at chance, 930
 At last, by hap, through some young trees it struck,
 And, plashing among bedded pebbles, stuck
 In the middle of a brook, — whose silver ramble
 Down twenty little falls, through reeds and bramble,
 Tracing along, it brought me to a cave, 935
 Whence it ran brightly forth, and white did lave
 The nether sides of mossy stones and rock, —
 'Mong which it gurgled blythe adieus, to mock
 Its own sweet grief at parting. Overhead,
 Hung a lush screen of drooping weeds, and spread 940
 Thick, as to curtain up some wood-nymph's home.
 ' Ah ! impious mortal, whither do I roam ? '
 Said I, low voic'd : ' Ah, whither ! 'T is the grot
 Of Proserpine, when Hell, obscure and hot,
 Doth her resign ; and where her tender hands 945
 She dabbles, on the cool and sluicy sands :
 Or 't is the cell of Echo, where she sits,
 And babbles thorough silence, till her wits
 Are gone in tender madness, and anon,
 Faints into sleep, with many a dying tone 950
 Of sadness. O that she would take my vows,
 And breathe them sighingly among the boughs,
 To sue her gentle ears for whose fair head,
 Daily, I pluck sweet flowerets from their bed,
 And weave them dyingly — send honey-whispers 955
 Round every leaf, that all those gentle lispers
 May sigh my love unto her pitying !
 O charitable echo ! hear, and sing
 This ditty to her ! — tell her ' — so I stay'd
 My foolish tongue, and listening, half afraid, 960

Stood stupefied with my own empty folly,
 And blushing for the freaks of melancholy.
 Salt tears were coming, when I heard my name
 Most fondly lipp'd, and then these accents came :
 ' Endymion ! the cave is secreter 965
 Than the isle of Delos. Echo hence shall stir
 No sighs but sigh-warm kisses, or light noise
 Of thy combing hand, the while it travelling cloys
 And trembles through my labyrinthine hair.'
 At that oppress'd I hurried in. — Ah ! where 970
 Are those swift moments ? Whither are they fled ?
 I 'll smile no more, Peona ; nor will wed
 Sorrow, the way to death ; but patiently
 Bear up against it : so farewell, sad sigh ;
 And come instead demurest meditation, 975
 To occupy me wholly, and to fashion
 My pilgrimage for the world's dusky brink.
 No more will I count over, link by link,
 My chain of grief : no longer strive to find
 A half-forgetfulness in mountain wind 980
 Blustering about my ears : aye, thou shalt see,
 Dearest of sisters, what my life shall be ;
 What a calm round of hours shall make my days.
 There is a paly flame of hope that plays
 Where'er I look : but yet, I 'll say 't is naught — 985
 And here I bid it die. Have not I caught,
 Already, a more healthy countenance ?
 By this the sun is setting ; we may chance
 Meet some of our near-dwellers with my car."

This said, he rose, faint-smiling like a star 990
 Through autumn mists, and took Peona's hand :
 They stept into the boat, and launch'd from land.

BOOK II.

O SOVEREIGN power of love! O grief! O balm!
 All records, saving thine, come cool, and calm,
 And shadowy, through the mist of passed years:
 For others, good or bad, hatred and tears
 Have become indolent; but touching thine, 5
 One sigh doth echo, one poor sob doth pine,
 One kiss brings honey-dew from buried days.
 The woes of Troy, towers smothering o'er their blaze,
 Stiff-holden shields, far-piercing spears, keen blades,
 Struggling, and blood, and shrieks — all dimly fades 10
 Into some backward corner of the brain;
 Yet, in our very souls, we feel amain
 The close of Troilus and Cressid sweet.
 Hence, pageant history! hence, gilded cheat!
 Swart planet in the universe of deeds! 15
 Wide sea, that one continuous murmur breeds
 Along the pebbled shore of memory!
 Many old rotten-timber'd boats there be
 Upon thy vaporous bosom, magnified
 To goodly vessels; many a sail of pride, 20
 And golden keel'd, is left unlaunch'd and dry.
 But wherefore this? What care, though owl did fly
 About the great Athenian admiral's mast?
 What care, though striding Alexander past
 The Indus with his Macedonian numbers? 25
 Though old Ulysses tortured from his slumbers
 The glutt'd Cyclops, what care? — Juliet leaning
 Amid her window-flowers, — sighing, — weaning
 Tenderly her fancy from its maiden snow,
 Doth more avail than these: the silver flow 30

Of Hero's tears, the swoon of Imogen,
 Fair Pastorella in the bandit's den,
 Are things to brood on with more ardency
 Than the death-day of empires. Fearfully
 Must such conviction come upon his head, 35
 Who, thus far, discontent, has dared to tread,
 Without one muse's smile, or kind behest,
 The path of love and poesy. But rest,
 In chafing restlessness, is yet more drear
 Than to be crush'd, in striving to uprear 40
 Love's standard on the battlements of song.
 So once more days and nights aid me along,
 Like legion'd soldiers.

Brain-sick shepherd prince,

What promise hast thou faithful guarded since
 The day of sacrifice? Or, have new sorrows 45
 Come with the constant dawn upon thy morrows?
 Alas! 't is his old grief. For many days,
 Has he been wandering in uncertain ways :
 Through wilderness, and woods of mossed oaks :
 Counting his woe-worn minutes, by the strokes 50
 Of the lone woodcutter ; and listening still,
 Hour after hour, to each lush-leaved rill.
 Now he is sitting by a shady spring,
 And elbow-deep with feverous fingering
 Stems the upbursting cold : a wild rose tree 55
 Pavilions him in bloom, and he doth see
 A bud which snares his fancy : lo ! but now
 He plucks it, dips its stalk in the water : how
 It swells, it buds, it flowers beneath his sight ;
 And, in the middle, there is softly pight 60
 A golden butterfly ; upon whose wings
 There must be surely character'd strange things,
 For with wide eye he wonders, and smiles oft.

Lightly this little herald flew aloft,
 Follow'd by glad Endymion's clasped hands : 65
 Onward it flies. From languor's sullen bands
 His limbs are loos'd, and eager, on he hies
 Dazzled to trace it in the sunny skies.
 It seem'd he flew, the way so easy was ;
 And like a new-born spirit did he pass 70
 Through the green evening quiet in the sun,
 O'er many a heath, through many a woodland dun,
 Through buried paths, where sleepy twilight dreams
 The summer time away. One track unseams
 A wooded cleft, and, far away, the blue 75
 Of ocean fades upon him : then, anew,
 He sinks adown a solitary glen,
 Where there was never sound of mortal men,
 Saving, perhaps, some snow-light cadences
 Melting to silence, when upon the breeze 80
 Some holy bark let forth an anthem sweet,
 To cheer itself to Delphi. Still his feet
 Went swift beneath the merry-winged guide,
 Until it reached a splashing fountain's side
 That, near a cavern's mouth, for ever pour'd 85
 Unto the temperate air : then high it soar'd,
 And, downward, suddenly began to dip,
 As if, athirst with so much toil, 't would sip
 The crystal spout-head : so it did, with touch
 Most delicate, as though afraid to smutch 90
 Even with mealy gold the waters clear.
 But, at that very touch, to disappear
 So fairy-quick, was strange ! Bewildered,
 Endymion sought around, and shook each bed
 Of covert flowers in vain : and then he flung 95
 Himself along the grass. What gentle tongue,
 What whisperer disturb'd his gloomy rest ?

It was a nymph uprisen to the breast
 In the fountain's pebbly margin, and she stood
 'Mong lilies, like the youngest of the brood. 100
 To him her dripping hand she softly kist,
 And anxiously began to plait and twist
 Her ringlets round her fingers, saying : " Youth !
 Too long, alas, hast thou starv'd on the ruth,
 The bitterness of love : too long indeed, 105
 Seeing thou art so gentle. Could I weed
 Thy soul of care, by heavens, I would offer
 All the bright riches of my crystal coffer
 To Amphitrite ; all my clear-eyed fish,
 Golden, or rainbow-sided, or purplish, 110
 Vermilion-tail'd, or finn'd with silvery gauze ;
 Yea, or my veined pebble-floor, that draws
 A virgin light to the deep ; my grotto-sands
 Tawny and gold, ooz'd slowly from far lands
 By my diligent springs ; my level lilies, shells, 115
 My charming rod, my potent river spells ;
 Yes, every thing, even to the pearly cup
 Meander gave me, — for I bubbled up
 To fainting creatures in a desert wild.
 But woe is me, I am but as a child 120
 To gladden thee ; and all I dare to say,
 Is, that I pity thee ; that on this day
 I 've been thy guide ; that thou must wander far
 In other regions, past the scanty bar
 To mortal steps, before thou canst be ta'en 125
 From every wasting sigh, from every pain,
 Into the gentle bosom of thy love.
 Why it is thus, one knows in heaven above :
 But, a poor Naiad, I guess not. Farewell !
 I have a ditty for my hollow cell." 130

Hereat, she vanish'd from Endymion's gaze,
 Who brooded o'er the water in amaze :
 The dashing fount pour'd on, and where its pool
 Lay, half asleep, in grass and rushes cool,
 Quick waterflies and gnats were sporting still, 135
 And fish were dimpling, as if good nor ill
 Had fallen out that hour. The wanderer,
 Holding his forehead, to keep off the burr
 Of smothering fancies, patiently sat down :
 And, while beneath the evening's sleepy frown 140
 Glow-worms began to trim their starry lamps,
 Thus breath'd he to himself : " Whoso encamps
 To take a fancied city of delight,
 O what a wretch is he ! and when 't is his,
 After long toil and travelling, to miss 145
 The kernel of his hopes, how more than vile :
 Yet, for him there's refreshment even in toil ;
 Another city doth he set about,
 Free from the smallest pebble-bead of doubt
 That he will seize on trickling honey-combs : 150
 Alas, he finds them dry ; and then he foams,
 And onward to another city speeds.
 But this is human life : the war, the deeds,
 The disappointment, the anxiety,
 Imagination's struggles, far and nigh, 155
 All human ; bearing in themselves this good,
 That they are still the air, the subtle food,
 To make us feel existence, and to show
 How quiet death is. Where soil is men grow,
 Whether to weeds or flowers : but for me, 160
 There is no depth to strike in : I can see
 Naught earthly worth my compassing ; so stand
 Upon a misty, jutting head of land —
 Alone ? No, no ; and by the Orphean lute,

When mad Eurydice is listening to 't ; 165
 I 'd rather stand upon this misty peak,
 With not a thing to sigh for, or to seek,
 But the soft shadow of my thrice-seen love,
 Than be — I care not what. O meekest dove
 Of heaven ! O Cynthia, ten-times bright and fair ! 170
 From thy blue throne, now filling all the air,
 Glance but one little beam of temper'd light
 Into my bosom, that the dreadful might
 And tyranny of love be somewhat scar'd !
 Yet do not so, sweet queen ; one torment spar'd, 175
 Would give a pang to jealous misery,
 Worse than the torment's self : but rather tie
 Large wings upon my shoulders, and point out
 My love's far dwelling. Though the playful rout
 Of Cupids shun thee, too divine art thou, 180
 'Too keen in beauty, for thy silver prow
 Not to have dipp'd in love's most gentle stream.
 O be propitious, nor severely deem
 My madness impious ; for, by all the stars
 That tend thy bidding, I do think the bars 185
 That kept my spirit in are burst — that I
 Am sailing with thee through the dizzy sky !
 How beautiful thou art ! The world how deep !
 How tremulous-dazzlingly the wheels sweep
 Around their axle ! Then these gleaming reins, 190
 How lithe ! When this thy chariot attains
 Its airy goal, haply some bower veils
 Those twilight eyes ? Those eyes ! — my spirit fails —
 Dear goddess, help ! or the wide-gaping air
 Will gulf me — help !” — At this with madden'd stare, 195
 And lifted hands, and trembling lips he stood ;
 Like old Deucalion mountain'd o'er the flood,
 Or blind Orion hungry for the morn.

And, but from the deep cavern there was borne
 A voice, he had been froze to senseless stone ; 200
 Nor sigh of his, nor plaint, nor passion'd moan
 Had more been heard. ' Thus swell'd it forth : " Descend,
 Young mountaineer ! descend where alleys bend
 Into the sparry hollows of the world !
 Oft hast thou seen bolts of the thunder hurl'd 205
 As from thy threshold ; day by day hast seen
 A little lower than the chilly sheen
 Of icy pinnacles, and dipp'dst thine arms
 Into the deadening ether that still charms
 Their marble being : now, as deep profound 210
 As those are high, descend ! He ne'er is crown'd
 With immortality, who fears to follow
 Where airy voices lead : so through the hollow,
 The silent mysteries of earth, descend ! "

He heard but the last words, nor could content 215
 One moment in reflection : for he fled
 Into the fearful deep, to hide his head
 From the clear moon, the trees, and coming madness.

'T was far too strange, and wonderful for sadness ;
 Sharpening, by degrees, his appetite 220
 To dive into the deepest. Dark, nor light,
 The region ; nor bright, nor sombre wholly,
 But mingled up ; a gleaming melancholy ;
 A dusky empire and its diadems ;
 One faint eternal eventide of gems. 225
 Aye, millions sparkled on a vein of gold,
 Along whose track the prince quick footsteps told,
 With all its lines abrupt and angular :
 Out-shooting sometimes, like a meteor-star,
 Through a vast antre ; then the metal woof, 230
 Like Vulcan's rainbow, with some monstrous roof

Curves hugely : now, far in the deep abyss,
 It seems an angry lightning, and doth hiss
 Fancy into belief ; anon it leads
 Through winding passages, where sameness breeds 235
 Vexing conceptions of some sudden change ;
 Whether to silver grots, or giant range
 Of sapphire columns, or fantastic bridge
 Athwart a flood of crystal. On a ridge
 Now fareth he, that o'er the vast beneath 240
 Towers like an ocean-cliff, and whence he seeth
 A hundred waterfalls, whose voices come
 But as the murmuring surge. Chilly and numb
 His bosom grew, when first he, far away,
 Descried an orb'd diamond, set to fray 245
 Old darkness from his throne : 't was like the sun
 Uprisen o'er chaos : and with such a stun
 Came the amazement, that, absorb'd in it,
 He saw no fiercer wonders — past the wit
 Of any spirit to tell, but one of those 250
 Who, when this planet's sphering time doth close,
 Will be its high remembrancers : who they?
 The mighty ones who have made eternal day
 For Greece and England. While astonishment
 With deep-drawn sighs was quieting, he went 255
 Into a marble gallery, passing through
 A mimic temple, so complete and true
 In sacred custom, that he well nigh fear'd
 To search it inwards ; whence far off appear'd,
 Through a long pillar'd vista, a fair shrine, 260
 And, just beyond, on light tiptoe divine,
 A quiver'd Dian. Stepping awfully,
 The youth approach'd ; oft turning his veil'd eye
 Down sidelong aisles, and into niches old.
 And when, more near against the marble cold 265

He had touch'd his forehead, he began to thread
 All courts and passages, where silence dead
 Rous'd by his whispering footsteps murmur'd faint :
 And long he travers'd to and fro, to acquaint
 Himself with every mystery, and awe ; 270
 Till, weary, he sat down before the maw
 Of a wide outlet, fathomless and dim
 To wild uncertainty and shadows grim.
 There, when new wonders ceas'd to float before,
 And thoughts of self came on, how crude and sore 275
 The journey homeward to habitual self !
 A mad-pursuing of the fog-born elf,
 Whose flitting lantern, through rude nettle-briar,
 Cheats us into a swamp, into a fire,
 Into the bosom of a hated thing. 280

What misery most drowningly doth sing
 In lone Endymion's ear, now he has caught
 The goal of consciousness? Ah, 't is the thought,
 The deadly feel of solitude : for lo!
 He cannot see the heavens, nor the flow 285
 Of rivers, nor hill-flowers running wild
 In pink and purple chequer, nor, up-pil'd,
 The cloudy rack slow journeying in the west,
 Like herded elephants ; nor felt, nor prest
 Cool grass, nor tasted the fresh slumberous air ; 290
 But far from such companionship to wear
 An unknown time, surcharg'd with grief, away,
 Was now his lot. And must he patient stay,
 Tracing fantastic figures with his spear ?
 "No!" exclaimed he, "why should I tarry here?" 295
 "No!" loudly echoed times innumerable.
 At which he straightway started, and 'gan tell
 His paces back into the temple's chief ;

Warming and glowing strong in the belief
 Of help from Dian : so that when again 300
 He caught her airy form, thus did he plain,
 Moving more near the while. "O Haunter chaste
 Of river sides, and woods, and heathy waste,
 Where with thy silver bow and arrows keen
 Art thou now forested? O woodland Queen, 305
 What smoothest air thy smoother forehead woos?
 Where dost thou listen to the wide halloos
 Of thy departed nymphs? Through what dark tree
 Glimmers thy crescent? Wheresoe'er it be,
 'Tis in the breath of heaven : thou dost taste 310
 Freedom as none can taste it, nor dost waste
 Thy loveliness in dismal elements ;
 But, finding in our green earth sweet contents,
 There livest blissfully. Ah, if to thee
 It feels Elysian, how rich to me, 315
 An exil'd mortal, sounds its pleasant name !
 Within my breast there lives a choking flame —
 O let me cool it zephyr-boughs among !
 A homeward fever parches up my tongue —
 O let me slake it at the running springs ! 320
 Upon my ear a noisy nothing rings —
 O let me once more hear the linnet's note !
 Before mine eyes thick films and shadows float —
 O let me 'noint them with the heaven's light !
 Dost thou now lave thy feet and ankles white? 325
 O think how sweet to me the freshening sluice !
 Dost thou now please thy thirst with berry-juice ?
 O think how this dry palate would rejoice ?
 If in soft slumber thou dost hear my voice,
 O think how I should love a bed of flowers !— 330
 Young goddess ! let me see my native bowers :
 Deliver me from this rapacious deep !"

Thus ending loudly, as he would o'erleap
 His destiny, alert he stood : but when
 Obstinate silence came heavily again, 335
 Feeling about for its old couch of space
 And airy cradle, lowly bow'd his face
 Desponding, o'er the marble floor's cold thrill.
 But 't was not long ; for, sweeter than the rill
 To its old channel, or a swollen tide 340
 To margin shallows, were the leaves he spied,
 And flowers, and wreaths, and ready myrtle crowns
 Up heaping through the slab : refreshment drowns
 Itself, and strives its own delights to hide —
 Nor in one spot alone ; the floral pride 345
 In a long whispering birth enchanted grew
 Before his footsteps ; as when heav'd anew
 Old ocean rolls a lengthened wave to the shore,
 Down whose green back the short-liv'd foam, all hoar,
 Bursts gradual, with a wayward indolence. 350

Increasing still in heart, and pleasant sense,
 Upon his fairy journey on he hastes ;
 So anxious for the end, he scarcely wastes
 One moment with his hand among the sweets :
 Onward he goes — he stops — his bosom beats 355
 As plainly in his ear, as the faint charm
 Of which the throbs were born. This still alarm,
 This sleepy music, forc'd him walk tiptoe :
 For it came more softly than the east could blow
 Arion's magic to the Atlantic isles ; 360
 Or than the west, made jealous by the smiles
 Of thron'd Apollo, could breathe back the lyre
 To seas Ionian and Tyrian.

O did he ever live, that lonely man,
 Who lov'd — and music slew not? 'T is the pest 365

Of love, that fairest joys give most unrest ;
 That things of delicate and tenderest worth
 Are swallow'd all, and made a seared dearth,
 By one consuming flame : it doth immerse
 And suffocate true blessings in a curse. 37^c
 Half-happy, by comparison of bliss,
 Is miserable! 'T was even so with this
 Dew-dropping melody, in the Carian's ear ;
 First heaven, then hell, and then forgotten clear,
 Vanish'd in elemental passion. 37^s

And down some swart abysm he had gone,
 Had not a heavenly guide benignant led
 To where thick myrtle branches, 'gainst his head
 Brushing, awakened : then the sounds again
 Went noiseless as a passing noontide rain 38^c
 Over a bower, where little space he stood ;
 For as the sunset peeps into a wood
 So saw he panting light, and towards it went
 Through winding alleys ; and lo, wonderment!
 Upon soft verdure saw, one here, one there, 38^s
 Cupids a-slumbering on their pinions fair.

After a thousand mazes overgone,
 At last, with sudden step, he came upon
 A chamber, myrtle-wall'd, embower'd high,
 Full of light, incense, tender minstrelsy, 39^o
 And more of beautiful and strange beside :
 For on a silken couch of rosy pride,
 In midst of all, there lay a sleeping youth
 Of fondest beauty ; fonder, in fair sooth,
 Than sighs could fathom, or contentment reach : 39^s
 And coverlids gold-tinted like the peach,
 Or ripe October's faded marigolds,
 Fell sleek upon him in a thousand folds —

Not hiding up an Apollonian curve
 Of neck and shoulder, nor the tenting swerve 400
 Of knee from knee, nor ankle's pointing light;
 But rather, giving them to the filled sight
 Officially. Sideway his face repos'd
 On one white arm, and tenderly unclos'd
 By tenderest pressure, a faint damask mouth 405
 To slumbery pout; just as the morning south
 Disparts a dew-lipp'd rose. Above his head,
 Four lily stalks did their white honours wed
 To make a coronal; and round him grew
 All tendrils green, of every bloom and hue, 410
 Together intertwin'd and trammel'd fresh:
 The vine of glossy sprout; the ivy mesh,
 Shading its Ethiop berries; and woodbine,
 Of velvet leaves and bugle-blooms divine;
 Convolvulus in streaked vases flush; 415
 The creeper, mellowing for an autumn blush;
 And virgin's bower, trailing airily;
 With other of the sisterhood. Hard by,
 Stood serene Cupids watching silently.
 One, kneeling to a lyre, touch'd the strings, 420
 Muffling to death the pathos with his wings;
 And, ever and anon, uprose to look
 At the youth's slumber: while another took
 A willow-bough, distilling odorous dew,
 And shook it on his hair; another flew 425
 In through the woven roof, and fluttering-wise
 Rain'd violets upon his sleeping eyes.

At these enchantments, and yet many more
 The breathless Latmian wonder'd o'er and o'er;
 Until, impatient in embarrassment, 430
 He forthright pass'd, and lightly treading went

To that same feather'd lyrist, who straightway,
 Smiling, thus whisper'd : " Though from upper day
 Thou art a wanderer, and thy presence here
 Might seem unholy, be of happy cheer ! 435
 For 't is the nicest touch of human honour,
 When some ethereal and high-favouring donor
 Presents immortal bowers to mortal sense ;
 As now 't is done to thee, Endymion. Hence
 Was I in no wise startled. So recline 440
 Upon these living flowers. Here is wine,
 Alive with sparkles — never, I aver,
 Since Ariadne was a vintager,
 So cool a purple : taste these juicy pears,
 Sent me by sad Vertumnus, when his fears 445
 Were high about Pomona : here is cream,
 Deepening to richness from a snowy gleam ;
 Sweeter than that nurse Amalthea skimm'd
 For the boy Jupiter : and here, undimm'd
 By any touch, a bunch of blooming plums 450
 Ready to melt between an infant's gums :
 And here is manna pick'd from Syrian trees,
 In starlight, by the three Hesperides.
 Feast on, and meanwhile I will let thee know
 Of all these things around us." He did so, 455
 Still brooding o'er the cadence of his lyre ;
 And thus : " I need not any hearing tire
 By telling how the sea-born goddess pin'd
 For a mortal youth, and how she strove to bind
 Him all in all unto her dotting self. 460
 Who would not be so prison'd ? but, fond elf,
 He was content to let her amorous plea
 Faint through his careless arms ; content to see
 An unseiz'd heaven dying at his feet ;
 Content, O fool ! to make a cold retreat, 465

When on the pleasant grass such love, lovelorn,
 Lay sorrowing ; when every tear was born
 Of diverse passion ; when her lips and eyes
 Were clos'd in sullen moisture, and quick sighs
 Came vex'd and pettish through her nostrils small. 470
 Hush ! no exclaim — yet, justly mightst thou call
 Curses upon his head. — I was half glad,
 But my poor mistress went distract and mad,
 When the boar tusk'd him : so away she flew
 To Jove's high throne, and by her plainings drew 475
 Immortal tear-drops down the thunderer's beard ;
 Whereon it was decreed he should be rear'd
 Each summer time to life. Lo ! this is he,
 That same Adonis, safe in the privacy
 Of this still region all his winter-sleep. 480
 Aye, sleep ; for when our love-sick queen did weep
 Over his waned corse, the tremulous shower
 Heal'd up the wound, and, with a balmy power,
 Medicin'd death to a lengthened drowsiness :
 The which she fills with visions, and doth dress 485
 In all this quiet luxury ; and hath set
 Us young immortals, without any let,
 To watch his slumber through. 'T is well nigh pass'd,
 Even to a moment's filling up, and fast
 She scuds with summer breezes, to pant through 490
 The first long kiss, warm firstling, to renew
 Embower'd sports in Cytherea's isle.
 Look ! how those winged listeners all this while
 Stand anxious : see ! behold ! ” — This clamant word
 Broke through the careful silence ; for they heard 495
 A rustling noise of leaves, and out there flutter'd
 Pigeons and doves : Adonis something mutter'd,
 The while one hand, that erst upon his thigh
 Lay dormant, mov'd convuls'd and gradually

Up to his forehead. Then there was a hum 500
 Of sudden voices, echoing, "Come! come!
 Arise! awake! Clear summer has forth walk'd
 Unto the clover-sward, and she has talk'd
 Full soothingly to every nested finch :
 Rise, Cupids! or we'll give the bluebell pinch 505
 To your dimpled arms. Once more sweet life begin!"
 At this, from every side they hurried in,
 Rubbing their sleepy eyes with lazy wrists,
 And doubling overhead their little fists
 In backward yawns. But all were soon alive : 510
 For as delicious wine doth, sparkling, dive
 In nectar'd clouds and curls through water fair,
 So from the arbour roof down swell'd an air
 Odorous and enlivening ; making all
 To laugh, and play, and sing, and loudly call 515
 For their sweet queen : when lo! the wreathed green
 Disparted, and far upward could be seen
 Blue heaven, and a silver car, air-borne,
 Whose silent wheels, fresh wet from clouds of morn,
 Spun off a drizzling dew, — which, falling chill 520
 On soft Adonis' shoulders, made him still
 Nestle and turn uneasily about.
 Soon were the white doves plain, with necks stretch'd out,
 And silken traces lightened in descent ;
 And soon, returning from love's banishment, 525
 Queen Venus leaning downward open arm'd :
 Her shadow fell upon his breast, and charm'd
 A tumult to his heart, and a new life
 Into his eyes. Ah, miserable strife,
 But for her comforting! unhappy sight, 530
 But meeting her blue orbs! Who, who can write
 Of these first minutes? The unchariest muse
 To embracements warm as theirs makes coy excuse.

O it has ruffled every spirit there,
 Saving love's self, who stands superb to share 535
 The general gladness : awfully he stands ;
 A sovereign quell is in his waving hands ;
 No sight can bear the lightning of his bow ;
 His quiver is mysterious, none can know
 What themselves think of it ; from forth his eyes 540
 There darts strange light of varied hues and dyes :
 A scowl is sometimes on his brow, but who
 Look full upon it feel anon the blue
 Of his fair eyes run liquid through their souls.
 Endymion feels it, and no more controls 545
 The burning prayer within him ; so, bent low,
 He had begun a plaining of his woe.
 But Venus, bending forward, said : " My child,
 Favour this gentle youth ; his days are wild
 With love — he — but alas ! too well I see 550
 Thou know'st the deepness of his misery.
 Ah, smile not so, my son : I tell thee true,
 That when through heavy hours I used to rue
 The endless sleep of this new-born Adon',
 This stranger aye I pitied. For upon 555
 A dreary morning once I fled away
 Into the breezy clouds, to weep and pray
 For this my love : for vexing Mars had teas'd
 Me even to tears : thence, when a little eas'd,
 Down-looking, vacant, through a hazy wood, 560
 I saw this youth as he despairing stood :
 Those same dark curls blown vagrant in the wind :
 Those same full-fringed lids a constant blind
 Over his sullen eyes : I saw him throw
 Himself on wither'd leaves, even as though 565
 Death had come sudden ; for no jot he mov'd,
 Yet mutter'd wildly. I could hear he lov'd

Some fair immortal, and that his embrace
 Had zoned her through the night. There is no trace
 Of this in heaven: I have mark'd each cheek, 570
 And find it is the vainest thing to seek;
 And that of all things 't is kept secretest.
 Endymion! one day thou wilt be blest:
 So still obey the guiding hand that fends
 Thee safely through these wonders for sweet ends. 575
 'T is a concealment needful in extreme:
 And if I guess'd not so, the sunny beam
 Thou shouldst mount up to with me. Now adieu!
 Here must we leave thee." — At these words up flew
 The impatient doves, up rose the floating car, 580
 Up went the hum celestial. High afar
 The Latmian saw them 'minish into naught;
 And, when all were clear vanish'd, still he caught
 A vivid lightning from that dreadful bow.
 When all was darkened, with Ætnean throe 585
 The earth clos'd — gave a solitary moan —
 And left him once again in twilight lone.

He did not rave, he did not stare aghast,
 For all those visions were o'ergone, and past,
 And he in loneliness: he felt assur'd 590
 Of happy times, when all he had endur'd
 Would seem a feather to the mighty prize.
 So, with unusual gladness, on he hies
 Through caves, and palaces of mottled ore,
 Gold dome, and crystal wall, and turquois floor, 595
 Black polish'd porticos of awful shade,
 And, at the last, a diamond balustrade,
 Leading afar past wild magnificence,
 Spiral through ruggedest loopholes, and thence
 Stretching across a void, then guiding o'er 600
 Enormous chasms, where, all foam and roar,

Streams subterranean tease their granite beds ;
 Then heighten'd just above the silvery heads
 Of a thousand fountains, so that he could dash
 The waters with his spear : but at the splash, 605
 Done heedlessly, those spouting columns rose
 Sudden a poplar's height, and 'gan to enclose
 His diamond path with fretwork, streaming round
 Alive, and dazzling cool, and with a sound,
 Haply, like dolphin tumults, when sweet shells 610
 Welcome the float of Thetis. Long he dwells
 On this delight ; for, every minute's space,
 The streams with changed magic interlace :
 Sometimes like delicatest lattices,
 Cover'd with crystal vines : then weeping trees, 615
 Moving about as in a gentle wind,
 Which, in a wink, to watery gauze refin'd,
 Pour'd into shapes of curtain'd canopies,
 Spangled, and rich with liquid broideries
 Of flowers, peacocks, swans, and naiads fair. 620
 Swifter than lightning went these wonders rare ;
 And then the water, into stubborn streams
 Collecting, mimick'd the wrought oaken beams,
 Pillars, and frieze, and high fantastic roof,
 Of those dusk places in times far aloof 625
 Cathedrals call'd. He bade a loth farewell
 To these founts Protean, passing gulf, and dell,
 And torrent, and ten thousand jutting shapes,
 Half seen through deepest gloom, and grisly gapes,
 Blackening on every side, and overhead 630
 A vaulted dome like Heaven's, far bespread
 With starlight gems : aye, all so huge and strange,
 The solitary felt a hurried change
 Working within him into something dreary. —
 Vex'd like a morning eagle, lost and weary, 635

And purblind amid foggy, midnight wolds.
 But he revives at once : for who beholds
 New sudden things, nor casts his mental slough?
 Forth from a rugged arch, in the dusk below,
 Came mother Cybele ! alone — alone — 640
 In sombre chariot ; dark foldings thrown
 About her majesty, and front death-pale,
 With turrets crown'd. Four maned lions hale
 The sluggish wheels ; solemn their toothed maws,
 Their surly eyes brow-hidden, heavy paws 645
 Uplifted drowsily, and nervy tails
 Covering their tawny brushes. Silent sails
 This shadowy queen athwart, and faints away
 In another gloomy arch.

Wherefore delay,
 Young traveller, in such a mournful place? 650
 Art thou wayworn, or canst not further trace
 The diamond path? And does it indeed end
 Abrupt in middle air? Yet earthward bend
 Thy forehead, and to Jupiter cloud-borne
 Call ardently ! He was indeed wayworn ; 655
 Abrupt, in middle air, his way was lost :
 To cloud-borne Jove he bowed, and there crost
 Towards him a large eagle, 'twixt whose wings,
 Without one impious word, himself he flings,
 Committed to the darkness and the gloom : 660
 Down, down, uncertain to what pleasant doom,
 Swift as a fathoming plummet down he fell
 Through unknown things : till exhal'd asphodel,
 And rose, with spicy fannings interbreath'd,
 Came swelling forth where little caves were wreath'd 665
 So thick with leaves and mosses, that they seem'd
 Large honey-combs of green, and freshly teem'd

With airs delicious. In the greenest nook
The eagle landed him, and farewell took.

It was a jasmine bower, all bestrown 670
With golden moss. His every sense had grown
Ethereal for pleasure; 'bove his head
Flew a delight half-graspable; his tread
Was Hesperèan; to his capable ears
Silence was music from the holy spheres; 675
A dewy luxury was in his eyes;
The little flowers felt his pleasant sighs
And stirr'd them faintly. Verdant cave and cell
He wander'd through, oft wondering at such swell
Of sudden exaltation: but, "Alas!" 680
Said he, "will all this gush of feeling pass
Away in solitude? And must they wane,
Like melodies upon a sandy plain,
Without an echo? Then shall I be left
So sad, so melancholy, so bereft! 685
Yet still I feel immortal! O my love,
My breath of life, where art thou? High above,
Dancing before the morning gates of heaven?
Or keeping watch among those starry seven,
Old Atlas' children? Art a maid of the waters. 690
One of shell-winding Triton's bright-hair'd daughters?
Or art, impossible! a nymph of Dian's,
Weaving a coronal of tender scions
For very idleness? Where'er thou art,
Methinks it now is at my will to start 695
Into thine arms; to scare Aurora's train,
And snatch thee from the morning; o'er the main
To scud like a wild bird, and take thee off
From thy sea-foamy cradle; or to doff
Thy shepherd vest, and woo thee'mid fresh leaves. 700

No, no, too eagerly my soul deceives
 Its powerless self : I know this cannot be.
 O let me then by some sweet dreaming flee
 To her entrancements : hither sleep awhile !
 Hither most gentle sleep ! and soothing foil 705
 For some few hours the coming solitude."

Thus spake he, and that moment felt endued
 With power to dream deliciously ; so wound
 Through a dim passage, searching till he found 710
 The smoothest mossy bed and deepest, where
 He threw himself, and just into the air
 Stretching his indolent arms, he took, O bliss !
 A naked waist : " Fair Cupid, whence is this ?"
 A well-known voice sigh'd, " Sweetest, here am I !
 At which soft ravishment, with doting cry 715
 They trembled to each other. — Helicon !
 O fountain'd hill ! Old Homer's Helicon !
 That thou wouldst spout a little streamlet o'er
 These sorry pages ; then the verse would soar 720
 And sing above this gentle pair, like lark
 Over his nested young : but all is dark
 Around thine aged top, and thy clear fount
 Exhales in mists to heaven. Aye, the count
 Of mighty Poets is made up ; the scroll 725
 Is folded by the Muses ; the bright roll
 Is in Apollo's hand : our dazed eyes
 Have seen a new tinge in the western skies :
 The world has done its duty. Yet, O yet,
 Although the sun of poesy is set,
 These lovers did embrace, and we must weep 730
 That there is no old power left to steep
 A quill immortal in their joyous tears.
 Long time in silence did their anxious fears

Question that thus it was ; long time they lay
 Fondling and kissing every doubt away ; 735
 Long time ere soft caressing sobs began
 To mellow into words, and then there ran
 Two bubbling springs of talk from their sweet lips.
 " O known Unknown ! from whom my being sips
 Such darling essence, wherefore may I not 740
 Be ever in these arms ? in this sweet spot
 Pillow my chin for ever ? ever press
 These toying hands and kiss their smooth excess ?
 Why not for ever and for ever feel
 That breath about my eyes ? Ah, thou wilt steal 745
 Away from me again, indeed, indeed —
 Thou wilt be gone away, and wilt not heed
 My lonely madness. Speak, my kindest fair !
 Is — is it to be so ? No ! Who will dare
 To pluck thee from me ? And, of thine own will, 750
 Full well I feel thou wouldst not leave me. Still
 Let me entwine thee surer, surer — now
 How can we part ? Elysium ! who art thou ?
 Who, that thou canst not be for ever here,
 Or lift me with thee to some starry sphere ? 755
 Enchantress ! tell me by this soft embrace,
 By the most soft completion of thy face,
 Those lips, O slippery blisses, twinkling eyes,
 And by these tenderest, milky sovereignties —
 These tenderest, and by the nectar-wine, 760
 The passion " ——— " O lov'd Ida the divine !
 Endymion ! dearest ! Ah, unhappy me !
 His soul will 'scape us — O felicity !
 How he does love me ! His poor temples beat
 To the very tune of love — how sweet, sweet, sweet. 765
 Revive, dear youth, or I shall faint and die ;
 Revive, or these soft hours will hurry by

In tranced dulness; speak, and let that spell
 Affright this lethargy! I cannot quell
 Its heavy pressure, and will press at least 770
 My lips to thine, that they may richly feast
 Until we taste the life of love again.
 What! dost thou move? dost kiss? O bliss! O pain!
 I love thee, youth, more than I can conceive;
 And so long absence from thee doth bereave 775
 My soul of any rest: yet must I hence:
 Yet, can I not to starry eminence
 Uplift thee; nor for very shame can own
 Myself to thee. Ah, dearest, do not groan
 Or thou wilt force me from this secrecy, 780
 And I must blush in heaven. O that I
 Had done it already; that the dreadful smiles
 At my lost brightness, my impassion'd wiles,
 Had waned from Olympus' solemn height,
 And from all serious Gods; that our delight 785
 Was quite forgotten, save of us alone!
 And wherefore so ashamed? 'T is but to atone
 For endless pleasure, by some coward blushes:
 Yet must I be a coward! — Horror rushes
 Too palpable before me — the sad look 790
 Of Jove — Minerva's start — no bosom shook
 With awe of purity — no Cupid pinion
 In reverence veil'd — my crystalline dominion
 Half lost, and all old hymns made nullity!
 But what is this to love? O I could fly 795
 With thee into the ken of heavenly powers,
 So thou wouldst thus, for many sequent hours,
 Press me so sweetly. Now I swear at once
 That I am wise, that Pallas is a dunce —
 Perhaps her love like mine is but unknown — 800
 O I do think that I have been alone

In chastity : yes, Pallas has been sighing,
 While every eve saw me my hair uptying
 With fingers cool as aspen leaves. Sweet love,
 I was as vague as solitary dove, 805
 Nor knew that nests were built. Now a soft kiss —
 Aye, by that kiss, I vow an endless bliss,
 An immortality of passion's thine :
 Ere long I will exalt thee to the shine
 Of heaven ambrosial : and we will shade 810
 Ourselves whole summers by a river glade ;
 And I will tell thee stories of the sky,
 And breathe thee whispers of its minstrelsy.
 My happy love will overwing all bounds !
 O let me melt into thee ; let the sounds 815
 Of our close voices marry at their birth ;
 Let us entwine hoveringly — O dearth
 Of human words ! roughness of mortal speech !
 Lispings empyrean will I sometime teach
 Thine honied tongue — lute-breathings, which I gasp 820
 To have thee understand, now while I clasp
 Thee thus, and weep for fondness — I am pained,
 Endymion : woe ! woe ! is grief contain'd
 In the very deeps of pleasure, my sole life ? " —
 Hereat, with many sobs, her gentle strife 825
 Melted into a languor. He returned
 Entranced vows and tears.

Ye who have yearn'd
 With too much passion, will here stay and pity,
 For the mere sake of truth ; as 't is a ditty
 Not of these days, but long ago 't was told 830
 By a cavern wind unto a forest old ;
 And then the forest told it in a dream
 To a sleeping lake, whose cool and level gleam

A poet caught as he was journeying
 To Phœbus' shrine ; and in it he did fling 835
 His weary limbs, bathing an hour's space,
 And after, straight in that inspired place
 He sang the story up into the air,
 Giving it universal freedom. There
 Has it been ever sounding for those ears 840
 Whose tips are glowing hot. The legend cheers
 Yon sentinel stars ; and he who listens to it
 Must surely be self-doom'd or he will rue it :
 For quenchless burnings come upon the heart,
 Made fiercer by a fear lest any part 845
 Should be engulfed in the eddying wind.
 As much as here is penn'd doth always find
 A resting place, thus much comes clear and plain ;
 Anon the strange voice is upon the wane —
 And 't is but echo'd from departing sound, 850
 That the fair visitant at last unwound
 Her gentle limbs, and left the youth asleep. —
 Thus the tradition of the gusty deep.

Now turn we to our former chroniclers. —
 Endymion awoke, that grief of hers 855
 Sweet paining on his ear : he sickly guess'd
 How lone he was once more, and sadly press'd
 His empty arms together, hung his head,
 And most forlorn upon that widow'd bed
 Sat silently. Love's madness he had known : 860
 Often with more than tortur'd lion's groan
 Moanings had burst from him ; but now that rage
 Had pass'd away : no longer did he wage
 A rough-voic'd war against the dooming stars.
 No, he had felt too much for such harsh jars : 865
 The lyre of his soul Æolian tun'd
 Forgot all violence, and but commun'd

With melancholy thought : O he had swoon'd
 Drunken from pleasure's nipple ; and his love
 Henceforth was dove-like. — Loth was he to move 870
 From the imprinted couch, and when he did,
 'T was with slow, languid paces, and face hid
 In muffling hands. So temper'd, out he stray'd
 Half seeing visions that might have dismay'd
 Alecto's serpents ; ravishments more keen 875
 Than Hermes' pipe, when anxious he did lean
 Over eclipsing eyes : and at the last
 It was a sounding grotto, vaulted, vast,
 O'er-studded with a thousand thousand pearls,
 And crimson-mouthed shells with stubborn curls, 880
 Of every shape and size, even to the bulk
 In which whales harbour close, to brood and sulk
 Against an endless storm. Moreover too,
 Fish-semblances, of green and azure hue,
 Ready to snort their streams. In this cool wonder 885
 Endymion sat down, and 'gan to ponder
 On all his life : his youth, up to the day
 When 'mid acclaim, and feasts, and garlands gay,
 He stept upon his shepherd throne : the look
 Of his white palace in wild forest nook, 890
 And all the revels he had lorded there :
 Each tender maiden whom he once thought fair,
 With every friend and fellow-woodlander —
 Pass'd like a dream before him. Then the spur
 Of the old bards to mighty deeds : his plans 895
 To nurse the golden age 'mong shepherd clans :
 That wondrous night : the great Pan-festival :
 His sister's sorrow ; and his wanderings all,
 Until into the earth's deep maw he rush'd :
 Then all its buried magic, till it flush'd 900
 High with excessive love. "And now," thought he,

" How long must I remain in jeopardy
 Of blank amazements that amaze no more ?
 Now I have tasted her sweet soul to the core
 All other depths are shallow : essences, 905
 Once spiritual, are like muddy lees,
 Meant but to fertilize my earthly root,
 And make my branches lift a golden fruit
 Into the bloom of heaven : other light,
 Though it be quick and sharp enough to blight 910
 The Olympian eagle's vision, is dark,
 Dark as the parentage of chaos. Hark !
 My silent thoughts are echoing from these shells;
 Or they are but the ghosts, the dying swells
 Of noises far away ? — list ! " — Hereupon 915
 He kept an anxious ear. The humming tone
 Came louder, and behold, there as he lay,
 On either side outgush'd, with misty spray,
 A copious spring ; and both together dash'd
 Swift, mad, fantastic round the rocks, and lash'd 920
 Among the conchs and shells of the lofty grot,
 Leaving a trickling dew. At last they shot
 Down from the ceiling's height, pouring a noise
 As of some breathless racer's whose hopes poise
 Upon the last few steps, and with spent force 925
 Along the ground they took a winding course.
 Endymion follow'd — for it seem'd that one
 Ever pursued, the other strove to shun —
 Follow'd their languid mazes, till well nigh
 He had left thinking of the mystery, — 930
 And was now rapt in tender hoverings
 Over the vanish'd bliss. Ah ! what is it sings
 His dream away ? What melodies are these ?
 They sound as through the whispering of trees,
 Not native in such barren vaults. Give ear ! 935

" O Arethusa, peerless nymph ! why fear
 Such tenderness as mine ? Great Dian, why,
 Why didst thou hear her prayer ? O that I
 Were rippling round her dainty fairness now,
 Circling about her waist, and striving how 940
 To entice her to a dive ! then stealing in
 Between her luscious lips and eyelids thin.
 O that her shining hair was in the sun,
 And I distilling from it thence to run
 In amorous rillets down her shrinking form ! 945
 To linger on her lily shoulders, warm
 Between her kissing breasts, and every charm
 Touch raptur'd ! — See how painfully I flow :
 Fair maid, be pitiful to my great woe.
 Stay, stay thy weary course, and let me lead, 950
 A happy wooer, to the flowery mead
 Where all that beauty snar'd me." — " Cruel god,
 Desist ! or my offended mistress' nod
 Will stagnate all thy fountains : — tease me not
 With syren words — Ah, have I really got 955
 Such power to madden thee ? And is it true —
 Away, away, or I shall dearly rue
 My very thoughts : in mercy then away,
 Kindest Alpheus, for should I obey
 My own dear will, 't would be a deadly bane. 960
 O, Oread-Queen ! would that thou hadst a pain
 Like this of mine, then would I fearless turn
 And be a criminal. Alas, I burn,
 I shudder — gentle river, get thee hence.
 Alpheus ! thou enchanter ! every sense 965
 Of mine was once made perfect in these woods.
 Fresh breezes, bowery lawns, and innocent floods,
 Ripe fruits, and lonely couch, contentment gave ;
 But ever since I heedlessly did lave

In thy deceitful stream, a panting glow 970
 Grew strong within me : wherefore serve me so,
 And call it love? Alas, 't was cruelty.
 Not once more did I close my happy eyes
 Amid the thrushes' song. Away! Avaunt!
 O 't was a cruel thing." — "Now thou dost taunt 975
 So softly, Arethusa, that I think
 If thou wast playing on my shady brink,
 Thou wouldst bathe once again. Innocent maid!
 Stifle thine heart no more ; — nor be afraid
 Of angry powers : there are deities 980
 Will shade us with their wings. Those fitful sighs
 'T is almost death to hear : O let me pour
 A dewy balm upon them ! — fear no more,
 Sweet Arethusa ! Dian's self must feel
 Sometimes these very pangs. Dear maiden, steal 985
 Blushing into my soul, and let us fly
 These dreary caverns for the open sky.
 I will delight thee all my winding course,
 From the green sea up to my hidden source
 About Arcadian forests ; and will shew 990
 The channels where my coolest waters flow
 Through mossy rocks ; where, 'mid exuberant green,
 I roam in pleasant darkness, more unseen
 Than Saturn in his exile ; where I brim
 Round flowery islands, and take thence a skim 995
 Of mealy sweets, which myriads of bees
 Buzz from their honeyed wings : and thou shouldst please
 Thyself to choose the richest, where we might
 Be incense-pillow'd every summer night.
 Doff all sad fears, thou white deliciousness, 1000
 And let us be thus comforted ; unless
 Thou couldst rejoice to see my hopeless stream
 Hurry distracted from Sol's temperate beam,

And pour to death along some hungry sands." —
 "What can I do, Alpheus? Dian stands 1005
 Severe before me : persecuting fate !
 Unhappy Arethusa ! thou wast late
 A huntress free in " — At this, sudden fell
 Those two sad streams adown a fearful dell.
 The Latmian listen'd, but he heard no more, 1010
 Save echo, faint repeating o'er and o'er
 The name of Arethusa. On the verge
 Of that dark gulf he wept, and said : " I urge
 Thee, gentle Goddess of my pilgrimage,
 By our eternal hopes, to soothe, to assuage, 1015
 If thou art powerful, these lovers' pains :
 And make them happy in some happy plains."

He turn'd — there was a whelming sound — he stept,
 There was a cooler light : and so he kept
 Towards it by a sandy path, and lo ! 1020
 More suddenly than doth a moment go.
 The visions of the earth were gone and fled —
 He saw the giant sea above his head.

BOOK III.

THERE are who lord it o'er their fellow-men
 With most prevailing tinsel: who unpen
 Their baaing vanities, to browse away
 The comfortable green and juicy hay
 From human pastures; or, O torturing fact! 5
 Who, through an idiot blink, will see unpack'd
 Fire-branded foxes to sear up and singe
 Our gold and ripe-eared hopes. With not one tinge
 Of sanctuary splendour, not a sight
 Able to face an owl's, they still are dight 10
 By the blear-eyed nations in empurpled vests,
 And crowns, and turbans. With unladen breasts,
 Save of blown self-applause, they proudly mount
 To their spirit's perch, their being's high account,
 Their tiptop nothings, their dull skies, their thrones — 15
 Amid the fierce intoxicating tones
 Of trumpets, shoutings, and belaboured drums,
 And sudden cannon. Ah! how all this hums,
 In wakeful ears, like uproar past and gone —
 Like thunder clouds that spake to Babylon, 20
 And set those old Chaldeans to their tasks. —
 Are then regalities all gilded masks?
 No, there are throned seats unscalable
 But by a patient wing, a constant spell,
 Or by ethereal things that, unconfined, 25
 Can make a ladder of the eternal wind,
 And poise about in cloudy thunder-tents
 To watch the abysm-birth of elements.
 Aye, 'bove the withering of old-lipped Fate
 A thousand Powers keep religious state, 30

In water, fiery realm, and airy bourne ;
 And, silent as a consecrated urn,
 Hold sphery sessions for a season due !
 Yet few of these far majesties, ah, few,
 Have bared their operations to this globe — 35
 Few, who with gorgeous pageantry enrobe
 Our piece of heaven — whose benevolence
 Shakes hand with our own Ceres ; every sense
 Filling with spiritual sweets to plenitude,
 As bees gorge full their cells. And, by the feud 40
 'Twixt Nothing and Creation, I here swear,
 Eterne Apollo ! that thy Sister fair
 Is of all these the gentlier-mightiest.
 When thy gold breath is misting in the west,
 She unobserved steals unto her throne, 45
 And there she sits most meek and most alone ;
 As if she had not pomp subservient ;
 As if thine eye, high Poet ! was not bent
 Towards her with the Muses in thine heart ;
 As if the ministring stars kept not apart, 50
 Waiting for silver-footed messages.
 O Moon ! the oldest shades 'mong oldest trees
 Feel palpitations when thou lookest in :
 O Moon ! old boughs !isp forth a holier din
 The while they feel thine airy fellowship. 55
 Thou dost bless every where, with silver lip
 Kissing dead things to life. The sleeping kine,
 Couch'd in thy brightness, dream of fields divine :
 Innumerable mountains rise, and rise,
 Ambitious for the hallowing of thine eyes ; 60
 And yet thy benediction passeth not
 One obscure hiding-place, one little spot
 Where pleasure may be sent : the nested wren
 Has thy fair face within its tranquil ken,

And from beneath a sheltering ivy leaf 65
 Takes glimpses of thee ; thou art a relief
 To the poor patient oyster, where it sleeps
 Within its pearly house. — The mighty deeps,
 The monstrous sea is thine — the myriad sea !
 O Moon ! far-spooming Ocean bows to thee, 70
 And Tellus feels his forehead's cumbrous load.

Cynthia ! where art thou now ? What far abode
 Of green or silvery bower doth enshrine
 Such utmost beauty ? Alas, thou dost pine
 For one as sorrowful : thy cheek is pale 75
 For one whose cheek is pale : thou dost bewail
 His tears, who weeps for thee. Where dost thou sigh ?
 Ah ! surely that light peeps from Vesper's eye,
 Or what a thing is love ! 'T is She, but lo !
 How chang'd, how full of ache, how gone in woe ! 80
 She dies at the thinnest cloud ; her loveliness
 Is wan on Neptune's blue : yet there 's a stress
 Of love-spangles, just off yon cape of trees,
 Dancing upon the waves, as if to please
 The curly foam with amorous influence. 85
 O, not so idle : for down-glancing thence
 She fathoms eddies, and runs wild about
 O'erwhelming water-courses ; scaring out
 The thorny sharks from hiding-holes, and fright'ning
 Their savage eyes with unaccustomed lightning. 90
 Where will the splendour be content to reach ?
 O love ! how potent hast thou been to teach
 Strange journeyings ! Wherever beauty dwells,
 In gulf or aerie, mountains or deep dells,
 In light, in gloom, in star or blazing sun, 95
 Thou pointest out the way, and straight 't is won.
 Amid his toil thou gav'st Leander breath ;

Thou leddest Orpheus through the gleams of death ;
 Thou madest Pluto bear thin element ;
 And now, O winged Chieftain ! thou hast sent 100
 A moon-beam to the deep, deep water-world,
 To find Endymion.

On gold sand impearl'd
 With lily shells, and pebbles milky white,
 Poor Cynthia greeted him, and sooth'd her light
 Against his pallid face : he felt the charm 105
 To breathlessness, and suddenly a warm
 Of his heart's blood : 't was very sweet ; he stay'd
 His wandering steps, and half-entranced laid
 His head upon a tuft of straggling weeds,
 To taste the gentle moon, and freshening beads, 110
 Lashed from the crystal roof by fishes' tails.
 And so he kept, until the rosy veils
 Mantling the east, by Aurora's peering hand
 Were lifted from the water's breast, and fann'd
 Into sweet air ; and sober'd morning came 115
 Meekly through billows : — when like taper-flame
 Left sudden by a dallying breath of air,
 He rose in silence, and once more 'gan fare
 Along his fated way.

Far had he roam'd,
 With nothing save the hollow vast, that foam'd 120
 Above, around, and at his feet ; save things
 More dead than Morpheus' imaginings :
 Old rusted anchors, helmets, breast-plates large
 Of gone sea-warriors ; brazen beaks and targe ;
 Rudders that for a hundred years had lost 125
 The sway of human hand ; gold vase emboss'd
 With long-forgotten story, and wherein
 No reveller had ever dipp'd a chin

But those of Saturn's vintage ; mouldering scrolls, 130
 Writ in the tongue of heaven, by those souls
 Who first were on the earth ; and sculptures rude
 In ponderous stone, developing the mood
 Of ancient Nox ; — then skeletons of man,
 Of beast, behemoth, and leviathan.
 And elephant, and eagle, and huge jaw 135
 Of nameless monster. A cold leaden awe
 These secrets struck into him ; and unless
 Dian had chased away that heaviness,
 He might have died : but now, with cheered feel,
 He onward kept ; wooing these thoughts to steal 140
 About the labyrinth in his soul of love.

"What is there in thee, Moon! that thou shouldst move
 My heart so potently? When yet a child
 I oft have dried my tears when thou hast smil'd.
 Thou seem'dst my sister: hand in hand we went 145
 From eve to morn across the firmament.
 No apples would I gather from the tree,
 Till thou hadst cool'd their cheeks deliciously :
 No tumbling water ever spake romance,
 But when my eyes with thine thereon could dance : 150
 No woods were green enough, no bower divine,
 Until thou liftedst up thine eyelids fine :
 In sowing time ne'er would I dibble take,
 Or drop a seed, till thou wast wide awake ;
 And, in the summer tide of blossoming, 155
 No one but thee hath heard me blithely sing
 And mesh my dewy flowers all the night.
 No melody was like a passing spright
 If it went not to solemnize thy reign.
 Yes, in my boyhood, every joy and pain 160
 By thee were fashion'd to the self-same end ;

And as I grew in years, still didst thou blend
 With all my ardours : thou wast the deep glen ;
 Thou wast the mountain-top — the sage's pen —
 The poet's harp — the voice of friends — the sun ; 165
 Thou wast the river — thou wast glory won ;
 Thou wast my clarion's blast — thou wast my steed —
 My goblet full of wine — my topmost deed : —
 Thou wast the charm of women, lovely Moon!
 O what a wild and harmonized tune 170
 My spirit struck from all the beautiful !
 On some bright essence could I lean, and lull
 Myself to immortality : I prest
 Nature's soft pillow in a wakeful rest.
 But, gentle Orb ! there came a nearer bliss — 175
 My strange love came — Felicity's abyss !
 She came, and thou didst fade, and fade away —
 Yet not entirely ; no, thy starry sway
 Has been an under-passion to this hour.
 Now I begin to feel thine orby power 180
 Is coming fresh upon me : O be kind,
 Keep back thine influence, and do not blind
 My sovereign vision. — Dearest love, forgive
 That I can think away from thee and live ! —
 Pardon me, airy planet, that I prize 185
 One thought beyond thine argent luxuries !
 How far beyond !” At this a surpris'd start
 Frosted the springing verdure of his heart ;
 For as he lifted up his eyes to swear
 How his own goddess was past all things fair, 190
 He saw far in the concave green of the sea
 An old man sitting calm and peacefully.
 Upon a weeded rock this old man sat,
 And his white hair was awful, and a mat
 Of weeds were cold beneath his cold thin feet ; 195

And, ample as the largest winding-sheet,
 A cloak of blue wrapp'd up his aged bones,
 O'erwrought with symbols by the deepest groans
 Of ambitious magic : every ocean-form
 Was woven in with black distinctness ; storm, 200
 And calm, and whispering, and hideous roar,
 Quicksand, and whirlpool, and deserted shore,
 Were emblem'd in the woof ; with every shape
 That skims, or dives, or sleeps, 'twixt cape and cape.
 The gulping whale was like a dot in the spell, 205
 Yet look upon it, and 't would size and swell
 To its huge self ; and the minutest fish
 Would pass the very hardest gazer's wish,
 And show his little eye's anatomy.
 Then there was pictur'd the regality 210
 Of Neptune ; and the sea nymphs round his state,
 In beauteous vassalage, look up and wait.
 Beside this old man lay a pearly wand,
 And in his lap a book, the which he conn'd
 So steadfastly, that the new denizen 215
 Had time to keep him in amazed ken,
 To mark these shadowings, and stand in awe.

The old man rais'd his hoary head and saw
 The wilder'd stranger — seeming not to see,
 His features were so lifeless. Suddenly 220
 He woke as from a trance ; his snow-white brows
 Went arching up, and like two magic ploughs
 Furrow'd deep wrinkles in his forehead large,
 Which kept as fixedly as rocky marge,
 Till round his wither'd lips had gone a smile. 225
 Then up he rose, like one whose tedious toil
 Had watch'd for years in forlorn hermitage,
 Who had not from mid-life to utmost age

Eas'd in one accent his o'erburden'd soul,
 Even to the trees. He rose : he grasp'd his stole, 230
 With convuls'd clenches waving it abroad,
 And in a voice of solemn joy, that aw'd
 Echo into oblivion, he said : —

“Thou art the man ! Now shall I lay my head
 In peace upon my watery pillow : now 235
 Sleep will come smoothly to my weary brow.
 O Jove ! I shall be young again, be young !
 O shell-borne Neptune, I am pierc'd and stung
 With new-born life ! What shall I do ? Where go,
 When I have cast this serpent-skin of woe ? — 240
 I'll swim to the syrens, and one moment listen
 Their melodies, and see their long hair glisten ;
 Anon upon that giant's arm I'll be,
 That writhes about the roots of Sicily :
 To northern seas I'll in a twinkling sail, 245
 And mount upon the snortings of a whale
 To some black cloud ; thence down I'll madly sweep
 On forked lightning, to the deepest deep,
 Where through some sucking pool I will be hurl'd
 With rapture to the other side of the world ! 250
 O, I am full of gladness ! Sisters three,
 I bow full-hearted to your old decree !
 Yes, every god be thank'd, and power benign,
 For I no more shall wither, droop, and pine.
 Thou art the man !” Endymion started back 255
 Dismay'd ; and, like a wretch from whom the rack
 Tortures hot breath, and speech of agony,
 Mutter'd : “What lonely death am I to die
 In this cold region ? Will he let me freeze,
 And float my brittle limbs o'er polar seas ? 260
 Or will he touch me with his searing hand,

And leave a black memorial on the sand ?
 Or tear me piece-meal with a bony saw,
 And keep me as a chosen food to draw
 His magian fish through hated fire and flame ? 265
 O misery of hell ! resistless, tame,
 Am I to be burnt up ? No, I will shout,
 Until the gods through heaven's blue look out ! —
 O Tartarus ! but some few days ago
 Her soft arms were entwining me, and on 270
 Her voice I hung like fruit among green leaves :
 Her lips were all my own, and — ah, ripe sheaves
 Of happiness ! ye on the stubble droop,
 But never may be garner'd. I must stoop
 My head, and kiss death's foot. Love ! love, farewell ! 275
 Is there no hope from thee ? This horrid spell
 Would melt at thy sweet breath. — By Dian's hind
 Feeding from her white fingers, on the wind
 I see thy streaming hair ! and now, by Pan,
 I care not for this old mysterious man ! ” 280

He spake, and walking to that aged form,
 Look'd high defiance. Lo ! his heart 'gan warm
 With pity, for the grey-hair'd creature wept.
 Had he then wrong'd a heart where sorrow kept ?
 Had he, though blindly contumelious, brought 285
 Rheum to kind eyes, a sting to humane thought,
 Convulsion to a mouth of many years ?
 He had in truth : and he was ripe for tears.
 The penitent shower fell, as down he knelt
 Before that care-worn sage, who trembling felt 290
 About his large dark locks, and faltering spake :

“ Arise, good youth, for sacred Phœbus' sake !
 I know thine inmost bosom, and I feel
 A very brother's yearning for thee steal

Into mine own : for why ? thou openest 295
 The prison gates that have so long opprest
 My weary watching. Though thou know'st it not,
 Thou art commission'd to this fated spot
 For great enfranchisement. O weep no more ;
 I am a friend to love, to loves of yore : 300
 Aye, hadst thou never lov'd an unknown power
 I had been grieving at this joyous hour ;
 But even now most miserable old,
 I saw thee, and my blood no longer cold
 Gave mighty pulses : in this tottering case 305
 Grew a new heart, which at this moment plays
 As dancingly as thine. Be not afraid,
 For thou shalt hear this secret all display'd,
 Now as we speed towards our joyous task."

So saying, this young soul in age's mask 310
 Went forward with the Carian side by side :
 Resuming quickly thus ; while ocean's tide
 Hung swollen at their backs, and jewel'd sands
 Took silently their foot-prints.

" My soul stands
 Now past the midway from mortality, 315
 And so I can prepare without a sigh
 To tell thee briefly all my joy and pain.
 I was a fisher once, upon this main,
 And my boat danc'd in every creek and bay ;
 Rough billows were my home by night and day, — 320
 The sea-gulls not more constant ; for I had
 No housing from the storm and tempests mad,
 But hollow rocks, — and they were palaces
 Of silent happiness, of slumberous ease :
 Long years of misery have told me so. 325
 Aye, thus it was one thousand years ago.

One thousand years ! — Is it then possible
 To look so plainly through them ? to dispel
 A thousand years with backward glance sublime ?
 To breathe away as 't were all scummy slime 330
 From off a crystal pool, to see its deep,
 And one's own image from the bottom peep ?
 Yes : now I am no longer wretched thrall,
 My long captivity and moanings all
 Are but a slime, a thin-pervading scum, 335
 The which I breathe away, and thronging come
 Like things of yesterday my youthful pleasures.

" I touch'd no lute, I sang not, trod no measures :
 I was a lonely youth on desert shores.
 My sports were lonely, 'mid continuous roars, 340
 And craggy isles, and sea-mew's plaintive cry
 P'laining discrepant between sea and sky.
 Dolphins were still my playmates ; shapes unseen
 Would let me feel their scales of gold and green,
 Nor be my desolation ; and, full oft, 345
 When a dread waterspout had rear'd aloft
 Its hungry hugeness, seeming ready ripe
 To burst with hoarsest thunderings, and wipe
 My life away like a vast sponge of fate,
 Some friendly monster, pitying my sad state, 350
 Has dived to its foundations, gulf'd it down,
 And left me tossing safely. But the crown
 Of all my life was utmost quietude :
 More did I love to lie in cavern rude,
 Keeping in wait whole days for Neptune's voice, 355
 And if it came at last, hark, and rejoice !
 There blush'd no summer eve but I would steer
 My skiff along green shelving coasts, to hear
 The shepherd's pipe come clear from aery steep,

Mingled with ceaseless bleatings of his sheep : 360
 And never was a day of summer shine,
 But I beheld its birth upon the brine :
 For I would watch all night to see unfold
 Heaven's gates, and Æthon snort his morning gold
 Wide o'er the swelling streams ; and constantly 365
 At brim of day-tide, on some grassy lea,
 My nets would be spread out. and I at rest.
 The poor folk of the sea-country I blest
 With daily boon of fish most delicate :
 They knew not whence this bounty, and elate 370
 Would strew sweet flowers on a sterile beach.

"Why was I not contented ? Wherefore reach
 At things which, but for thee. O Latmian !
 Had been my dreary death ? Fool ! I began
 To feel distemper'd longings : to desire 375
 The utmost privilege that ocean's sire
 Could grant in benediction : to be free
 Of all his kingdom. Long in misery
 I wasted, ere in one extremest fit
 I plung'd for life or death. To interknit 380
 One's senses with so dense a breathing stuff
 Might seem a work of pain ; so not enough
 Can I admire how crystal-smooth it felt,
 And buoyant round my limbs. At first I dwelt
 Whole days and days in sheer astonishment ; 385
 Forgetful utterly of self-intent ;
 Moving but with the mighty ebb and flow.
 Then, like a new fledg'd bird that first doth shew
 His spreaded feathers to the morrow chill,
 I tried in fear the pinions of my will. 390
 'T was freedom ! and at once I visited
 The ceaseless wonders of this ocean-bed.

No need to tell thee of them, for I see
 That thou hast been a witness — it must be
 For these I know thou canst not feel a drouth, 395
 By the melancholy corners of that mouth.
 So I will in my story straightway pass
 To more immediate matter. Woe, alas !
 That love should be my bane ! Ah, Scylla fair !
 Why did poor Glaucus ever — ever dare 400
 To sue thee to his heart ? Kind stranger-youth !
 I lov'd her to the very white of truth,
 And she would not conceive it. Timid thing !
 She fled me swift as sea-bird on the wing,
 Round every isle, and point, and promontory, 405
 From where large Hercules wound up his story
 Far as Egyptian Nile. My passion grew
 The more, the more I saw her dainty hue
 Gleam delicately through the azure clear :
 Until 't was too fierce agony to bear ; 410
 And in that agony, across my grief
 It flash'd, that Circe might find some relief —
 Cruel enchantress ! So above the water
 I rear'd my head, and look'd for Phœbus' daughter.
 Ææa's isle was wondering at the moon : — 415
 It seem'd to whirl around me, and a swoon
 Left me dead-drifting to that fatal power.

“ When I awoke, 't was in a twilight bower ;
 Just when the light of morn, with hum of bees,
 Stole through its verdurous matting of fresh trees. 420
 How sweet, and sweeter ! for I heard a lyre,
 And over it a sighing voice expire.
 It ceased — I caught light footsteps ; and anon
 The fairest face that morn e'er look'd upon
 Push'd through a screen of roses. Starry Jove ! 425

With tears, and smiles, and honey-words she wove
 A net whose thraldom was more bliss than all
 The range of flower'd Elysium. Thus did fall
 The dew of her rich speech : ' Ah ! Art awake ?
 O let me hear thee speak, for Cupid's sake ! 430
 I am so oppress'd with joy ! Why, I have shed
 An urn of tears, as though thou wert cold dead ;
 And now I find thee living, I will pour
 From these devoted eyes their silver store,
 Until exhausted of the latest drop, 435
 So it will pleasure thee, and force thee stop
 Here, that I too may live : but if beyond
 Such cool and sorrowful offerings, thou art fond
 Of soothing warmth, of dalliance supreme ;
 If thou art ripe to taste a long love dream ; 440
 If smiles, if dimples, tongues for ardour mute,
 Hang in thy vision like a tempting fruit,
 O let me pluck it for thee.' Thus she link'd
 Her charming syllables, till indistinct
 Their music came to my o'er-sweeten'd soul ; 445
 And then she hover'd over me, and stole
 So near, that if no nearer it had been
 This furrow'd visage thou hadst never seen.

" Young man of Latmos ! thus particular
 Am I, that thou may'st plainly see how far 450
 This fierce temptation went : and thou may'st not
 Exclaim, How then, was Scylla quite forgot ?

" Who could resist ? Who in this universe ?
 She did so breathe ambrosia ; so immerse
 My fine existence in a golden clime. 455
 She took me like a child of suckling time,
 And cradled me in roses. Thus condemn'd,
 The current of my former life was stemm'd,

And to this arbitrary queen of sense
 I bow'd a tranced vassal : nor would thence 460
 Have mov'd, even though Amphion's harp had woo'd
 Me back to Scylla o'er the billows rude.
 For as Apollo each eve doth devise
 A new appareling for western skies ;
 So every eve, nay every spendthrift hour 465
 Shed balmy consciousness within that bower.
 And I was free of haunts umbrageous ;
 Could wander in the mazy forest-house
 Of squirrels, foxes shy, and antler'd deer,
 And birds from coverts innermost and drear 470
 Warbling for very joy mellifluous sorrow —
 To me new-born delights !

“ Now let me borrow,
 For moments few, a temperament as stern
 As Pluto's sceptre, that my words not burn
 These uttering lips, while I in calm speech tell 475
 How specious heaven was changed to real hell.

“ One morn she left me sleeping : half awake
 I sought for her smooth arms and lips, to slake
 My greedy thirst with nectarous camel-draughts ;
 But she was gone. Whereat the barbed shafts 480
 Of disappointment stuck in me so sore,
 That out I ran and search'd the forest o'er.
 Wandering about in pine and cedar gloom
 Damp awe assail'd me ; for there 'gan to boom
 A sound of moan, an agony of sound, 485
 Sepulchral from the distance all around.
 'Then came a conquering earth-thunder, and rumbled
 That fierce complain to silence : while I stumbled
 Down a precipitous path, as if impell'd.
 I came to a dark valley. — Groanings swell'd 490

Poisonous about my ears, and louder grew,
 The nearer I approach'd a flame's gaunt blue,
 That glar'd before me through a thorny brake.
 This fire, like the eye of gordian snake,
 Bewitch'd me towards ; and I soon was near 495
 A sight too fearful for the feel of fear :
 In thicket hid I curs'd the haggard scene —
 The banquet of my arms, my arbour queen,
 Seated upon an uptorn forest root ;
 And all around her shapes, wizard and brute, 500
 Laughing, and wailing, groveling, serpentine,
 Shewing tooth, tusk, and venom-bag, and sting !
 O such deformities ! Old Charon's self,
 Should he give up awhile his penny pelf,
 And take a dream 'mong rushes Stygian, 505
 It could not be so phantasied. Fierce, wan,
 And tyrannizing was the lady's look,
 As over them a gnarled staff she shook.

Oft-times upon the sudden she laugh'd out,
 And from a basket emptied to the rout 510
 Clusters of grapes, the which they raven'd quick
 And roar'd for more ; with many a hungry lick
 About their shaggy jaws. Avenging, slow,
 Anon she took a branch of mistletoe.
 And emptied on't a black dull-gurgling phial : 515
 Groan'd one and all, as if some piercing trial
 Was sharpening for their pitiable bones.
 She lifted up the charm : appealing groans
 From their poor breasts went suing to her ear
 In vain ; remorseless as an infant's bier 520
 She whisk'd against their eyes the sooty oil.
 Whereat was heard a noise of painful toil,
 Increasing gradual to a tempest rage,
 Shrieks, yells, and groans of torture-pilgrimage ;

Until their grieved bodies 'gan to bloat 525
 And puff from the tail's end to stifled throat :
 Then was appalling silence : then a sight
 More wildering than all that hoarse affright ;
 For the whole herd, as by a whirlwind writhen,
 Went through the dismal air like one huge Python 530
 Antagonizing Boreas, — and so vanish'd.
 Yet there was not a breath of wind : she banish'd
 These phantoms with a nod. Lo ! from the dark
 Came waggish fauns, and nymphs, and satyrs stark,
 With dancing and loud revelry, — and went 535
 Swifter than centaurs after rapine bent. —
 Sighing an elephant appear'd and bow'd
 Before the fierce witch, speaking thus aloud
 In human accent : ' Potent goddess ! chief
 Of pains resistless ! make my being brief, 540
 Or let me from this heavy prison fly :
 Or give me to the air, or let me die !
 I sue not for my happy crown again ;
 I sue not for my phalanx on the plain ;
 I sue not for my lone, my widow'd wife ; 545
 I sue not for my ruddy drops of life,
 My children fair, my lovely girls and boys !
 I will forget them ; I will pass these joys ;
 Ask naught so heavenward, so too — too high :
 Only I pray, as fairest boon, to die, 550
 Or be deliver'd from this cumbrous flesh,
 From this gross, detestable, filthy mesh,
 And merely given to the cold bleak air.
 Have mercy, Goddess ! Circe, feel my prayer !'

" That curst magician's name fell icy numb 555
 Upon my wild conjecturing : truth had come
 Naked and sabre-like against my heart.

I saw a fury whetting a death-dart ;
 And my slain spirit, overwrought with fright,
 Fainted away in that dark lair of night. 560
 Think, my deliverer, how desolate
 My waking must have been ! disgust, and hate,
 And terrors manifold divided me
 A spoil amongst them. I prepar'd to flee
 Into the dungeon core of that wild wood : 565
 I fled three days — when lo ! before me stood
 Glaring the angry witch. O Dis, even now,
 A clammy dew is beading on my brow,
 At mere remembering her pale laugh, and curse.
 ' Ha ! ha ! Sir Dainty ! there must be a nurse 570
 Made of rose leaves and thistledown, express,
 To cradle thee, my sweet, and lull thee : yes,
 I am too flinty-hard for thy nice touch :
 My tenderest squeeze is but a giant's clutch. 575
 So, fairy-thing, it shall have lullabies
 Unheard of yet ; and it shall still its cries
 Upon some breast more lily-feminine.
 Oh, no — it shall not pine, and pine, and pine
 More than one pretty, trifling thousand years ;
 And then 't were pity, but fate's gentle shears 580
 Cut short its immortality. Sea-flirt !
 Young dove of the waters ! truly I 'll not hurt
 One hair of thine : see how I weep and sigh,
 That our heart-broken parting is so nigh.
 And must we part ? Ah, yes, it must be so. 585
 Yet ere thou leavest me in utter woe,
 Let me sob over thee my last adieus,
 And speak a blessing : Mark me ! thou hast thews
 Immortal, for thou art of heavenly race :
 But such a love is mine, that here I chase 590
 Eternally away from thee all bloom

Of youth, and destine thee towards a tomb.
 Hence shalt thou quickly to the watery vast ;
 And there, ere many days be overpast,
 Disabled age shall seize thee ; and even then 595
 Thou shalt not go the way of aged men ;
 But live and wither, cripple and still breathe
 Ten hundred years : which gone, I then bequeath
 Thy fragile bones to unknown burial.
 Adieu, sweet love, adieu ! ' — As shot stars fall, 600
 She fled ere I could groan for mercy. Stung
 And poisoned was my spirit : despair sung
 A war-song of defiance 'gainst all hell.
 A hand was at my shoulder to compel
 My sullen steps ; another 'fore my eyes 605
 Moved on with pointed finger. In this guise
 Enforced, at the last by ocean's foam
 I found me ; by my fresh, my native home.
 Its tempering coolness, to my life akin,
 Came salutary as I waded in ; 610
 And, with a blind voluptuous rage, I gave
 Battle to the swollen billow-ridge, and drave
 Large froth before me, while there yet remain'd
 Hale strength, nor from my bones all marrow drain'd.

“ Young lover, I must weep — such hellish spite 615
 With dry cheek who can tell ? While thus my might
 Proving upon this element, dismay'd,
 Upon a dead thing's face my hand I laid ;
 I look'd — 't was Scylla ! Cursed, cursed Circe !
 O vulture-witch, hast never heard of mercy ? 620
 Could not thy harshest vengeance be content,
 But thou must nip this tender innocent
 Because I lov'd her ? — Cold, O cold indeed
 Were her fair limbs, and like a common weed

The sea-swell took her hair. Dead as she was 625
 I clung about her waist, nor ceas'd to pass
 Fleet as an arrow through unfathom'd brine,
 Until there shone a fabric crystalline,
 Ribb'd and inlaid with coral, pebble, and pearl.
 Headlong I darted ; at one eager swirl 630
 Gain'd its bright portal, enter'd, and behold !
 'T was vast, and desolate, and icy-cold ;
 And all around — But wherefore this to thee
 Who in few minutes more thyself shalt see? —
 I left poor Scylla in a niche and fled. 635
 My fever'd parchings up, my scathing dread
 Met palsy half way: soon these limbs became
 Gaunt, wither'd, sapless, feeble, cramp'd, and lame.

“ Now let me pass a cruel, cruel space,
 Without one hope, without one faintest trace 640
 Of mitigation, or redeeming bubble
 Of colour'd phantasy : for I fear 't would trouble
 Thy brain to loss of reason : and next tell
 How a restoring chance came down to quell
 One half of the witch in me.

“ On a day 645
 Sitting upon a rock above the spray,
 I saw grow up from the horizon's brink
 A gallant vessel : soon she seem'd to sink
 Away from me again, as though her course
 Had been resum'd in spite of hindering force — 650
 So vanish'd : and not long, before arose
 Dark clouds, and muttering of winds morose.
 Old Æolus would stifle his mad spleen,
 But could not : therefore all the billows green
 Toss'd up the silver spume against the clouds. 655
 The tempest came : I saw that vessel's shrouds

In perilous bustle ; while upon the deck
 Stood trembling creatures. I beheld the wreck ;
 The final gulping ; the poor struggling souls :
 I heard their cries amid loud thunder-rolls. 660
 O they had all been sav'd but crazed old
 Annull'd my vigorous cravings : and thus quell'd
 And curb'd, think on 't, O Latmian ! did I sit
 Writhing with pity, and a cursing fit
 Against that hell-born Circe. The crew had gone, 665
 By one and one, to pale oblivion ;
 And I was gazing on the surges prone,
 With many a scalding tear and many a groan,
 When at my feet emerg'd an old man's hand,
 Grasping this scroll, and this same slender wand. 670
 I knelt with pain — reach'd out my hand — had grasp'd
 These treasures — touch'd the knuckles — they unclasp'd —
 I caught a finger : but the downward weight
 O'erpowered me — it sank. Then 'gan abate
 The storm, and through chill aguish gloom outburst 675
 The comfortable sun. I was athirst
 To search the book, and in the warming air
 Parted its dripping leaves with eager care.
 Strange matters did it treat of, and drew on
 My soul page after page, till wellnigh won 680
 Into forgetfulness ; when, stupefied,
 I read these words, and read again, and tried
 My eyes against the heavens, and read again.
 O what a load of misery and pain
 Each Atlas-line bore off ! — a shine of hope 685
 Came gold around me, cheering me to cope
 Strenuous with hellish tyranny. Attend !
 For thou hast brought their promise to an end.

“ *In the wide sea there lives a forlorn wretch,
 Doom'd with enfeebled carcase to outstretch*

*His loath'd existence through ten centuries,
 And then to die alone. Who can devise
 A total opposition? No one. So
 One million times ocean must ebb and flow,
 And he oppressed. Yet he shall not die,* 695
*These things accomplish'd:— If he utterly
 Scans all the depths of magic, and expounds
 The meanings of all motions, shapes, and sounds;
 If he explores all forms and substances
 Straight homeward to their symbol-essences;* 700
*He shall not die. Moreover, and in chief,
 He must pursue this task of joy and grief
 Most piously;— all lovers tempest-tost,
 And in the savage overwhelming lost,
 He shall deposit side by side,* 705
*Time's creeping shall the dreary space fulfil:
 Which done, and all these labours ripened,
 A youth, by heavenly power lov'd and led,
 Shall stand before him; whom he shall direct
 How to consummate all. The youth elect* 710
Must do the thing, or both will be destroy'd.' ”

“ Then,” cried the young Endymion, overjoy'd,
 “ We are twin brothers in this destiny!
 Say, I intreat thee, what achievement high
 Is, in this restless world, for me reserv'd. 715
 What! if from thee my wandering feet had swerv'd,
 Had we both perish'd? ” — “ Look! ” the sage replied,
 “ Dost thou not mark a gleaming through the tide,
 Of divers brilliances? ’T is the edifice
 I told thee of, where lovely Scylla lies; 720
 And where I have enshrined piously
 All lovers, whom fell storms have doom'd to die
 Throughout my bondage.” Thus discoursing, on
 They went till unobscur'd the porches shone;

Which hurryingly they gain'd, and enter'd straight. 725
 Sure never since King Neptune held his state
 Was seen such wonders underneath the stars.
 Turn to some level plain where haughty Mars
 Has legion'd all his battle ; and behold
 How every soldier, with firm foot, doth hold 730
 His even breast : see, many steeled squares,
 And rigid ranks of iron — whence who dares
 One step ? Imagine further, line by line,
 These warrior thousands on the field supine : —
 So in that crystal place, in silent rows, 735
 Poor lovers lay at rest from joys and woes. —
 The stranger from the mountains, breathless, trac'd
 Such thousands of shut eyes in order plac'd ;
 Such ranges of white feet, and patient lips
 All ruddy, — for here death no blossom nips. 740
 He mark'd their brows and foreheads ; saw their hair
 Put sleekly on one side with nicest care ;
 And each one's gentle wrists, with reverence,
 Put cross-wise to its heart.

“ Let us commence,”

Whisper'd the guide, stuttering with joy, “ even now.” 745
 He spake, and, trembling like an aspen-bough,
 Began to tear his scroll in pieces small,
 Uttering the while some mumblings funeral.
 He tore it into pieces small as snow
 That drifts unfeather'd when bleak northerns blow ; 750
 And having done it, took his dark blue cloak
 And bound it round Endymion : then struck
 His wand against the empty air times nine. —
 “ What more there is to do, young man, is thine :
 But first a little patience ; first undo 755
 This tangled thread, and wind it to a clue.

Ah, gentle ! 't is as weak as spider's skein ;
 And shouldst thou break it — What, is it done so clean ?
 A power overshadows thee ! Oh, brave !
 The spite of hell is tumbling to its grave. 760
 Here is a shell ; 't is pearly blank to me,
 Nor mark'd with any sign or charactery —
 Canst thou read aught ? O read for pity's sake !
 Olympus ! we are safe ! Now, Carian, break
 This wand against yon lyre on the pedestal." 765

'T was done : and straight with sudden swell and fall
 Sweet music breath'd her soul away, and sigh'd
 A lullaby to silence. — " Youth ! now strew
 These minced leaves on me, and passing through
 Those files of dead, scatter the same around, 770
 And thou wilt see the issue." — 'Mid the sound
 Of flutes and viols, ravishing his heart,
 Endymion from Glaucus stood apart,
 And scatter'd in his face some fragments light.
 How lightning-swift the change ! A youthful wight 775
 Smiling beneath a coral diadem,
 Out-sparkling sudden like an upturn'd gem,
 Appear'd, and, stepping to a beauteous corse,
 Kneel'd down beside it, and with tenderest force
 Press'd its cold hand, and wept — and Scylla sigh'd ! 780
 Endymion, with quick hand, the charm applied —
 The nymph arose : he left them to their joy,
 And onward went upon his high employ,
 Showering those powerful fragments on the dead.
 And, as he pass'd, each lifted up its head, 785
 As doth a flower at Apollo's touch.
 Death felt it to his inwards ; 't was too much :
 Death fell a-weeping in his charnel-house.
 The Latmian persever'd along, and thus

All were re-animated. There arose 790
 A noise of harmony, pulses and throes
 Of gladness in the air — while many, who
 Had died in mutual arms devout and true,
 Sprang to each other madly ; and the rest
 Felt a high certainty of being blest. 795
 They gaz'd upon Endymion. Enchantment
 Grew drunken, and would have its head and bent.
 Delicious symphonies, like airy flowers,
 Budded, and swell'd, and, full-blown, shed full showers
 Of light, soft, unseen leaves of sounds divine. 800
 The two deliverers tasted a pure wine
 Of happiness, from fairy-press ooz'd out.
 Speechless they ey'd each other, and about
 The fair assembly wander'd to and fro,
 Distracted with the richest overflow 805
 Of joy that ever pour'd from heaven.

——“ Away ! ”

Shouted the new-born god ; “ Follow, and pay
 Our piety to Neptunus supreme ! ” —
 Then Scylla, blushing sweetly from her dream,
 They led on first, bent to her meek surprise, 810
 Through portal columns of a giant size,
 Into the vaulted, boundless emerald.
 Joyous all follow'd, as the leader call'd,
 Down marble steps ; pouring as easily
 As hour-glass sand — and fast, as you might see 815
 Swallows obeying the south summer's call,
 Or swans upon a gentle waterfall.

Thus went that beautiful multitude, nor far,
 Ere from among some rocks of glittering spar,
 Just within ken, they saw descending thick 820
 Another multitude. Whereat more quick

Moved either host. On a wide sand they met,
 And of those numbers every eye was wet ;
 For each their old love found. A murmuring rose,
 Like what was never heard in all the throes 825
 Of wind and waters : 't is past human wit
 To tell ; 't is dizziness to think of it.

This mighty consummation made, the host
 Mov'd on for many a league ; and gain'd and lost
 Huge sea-marks ; vanward swelling in array, 830
 And from the rear diminishing away, —
 Till a faint dawn surpris'd them. Glaucus cried :
 " Behold ! behold, the palace of his pride !
 God Neptune's palace ! " With noise increas'd,
 They shoulder'd on towards that brightening east. 835
 At every onward step proud domes arose
 In prospect, — diamond gleams, and golden glows
 Of amber 'gainst their faces levelling.
 Joyous, and many as the leaves in spring,
 Still onward ; still the splendour gradual swell'd. 840
 Rich opal domes were seen, on high upheld
 By jasper pillars, letting through their shafts
 A blush of coral. Copious wonder-draughts
 Each gazer drank ; and deeper drank more near :
 For what poor mortals fragment up, as mere 845
 As marble was there lavish, to the vast
 Of one fair palace, that far, far surpass'd,
 Even for common bulk, those olden three,
 Memphis, and Babylon, and Nineveh.

As large, as bright, as colour'd as the bow 850
 Of Iris, when unfading it doth shew
 Beyond a silvery shower, was the arch
 Through which this Paphian army took its march,

Into the outer courts of Neptune's state :
 Whence could be seen, direct, a golden gate, 855
 To which the leaders sped : but not half raught
 Ere it burst open swift as fairy thought,
 And made those dazzled thousands veil their eyes
 Like callow eagles at the first sunrise.
 Soon with an eagle nativeness their gaze 860
 Ripe from hue-golden swoons took all the blaze,
 And then, behold ! large Neptune on his throne
 Of emerald deep : yet not exalt alone ;
 At his right hand stood winged Love, and on
 His left sat smiling Beauty's paragon. 865

Far as the mariner on highest mast
 Can see all round upon the calmed vast,
 So wide was Neptune's hall : and as the blue
 Doth vault the waters, so the waters drew
 Their doming curtains, high, magnificent, 870
 Aw'd from the throne aloof ; — and when storm-rent
 Disclos'd the thunder-gloomings in Jove's air ;
 But sooth'd as now, flash'd sudden everywhere,
 Noiseless, sub-marine cloudlets, glittering
 Death to a human eye : for there did spring 875
 From natural west, and east, and south, and north,
 A light as of four sunsets, blazing forth
 A gold-green zenith 'bove the Sea-God's head.
 Of lucid depth the floor, and far outspread
 As breezeless lake, on which the slim canoe 880
 Of feather'd Indian darts about, as through
 The delicatest air : air verily,
 But for the portraiture of clouds and sky :
 This palace floor breath-air, — but for the amaze
 Of deep-seen wonders motionless, — and blaze 885
 Of the dome pomp, reflected in extremes,
 Globing a golden sphere.

They stood in dreams
 Till Triton blew his horn. The palace rang ;
 The Nereids danc'd ; the Syrens faintly sang ;
 And the great Sea-King bow'd his dripping head. 890
 Then Love took wing, and from his pinions shed
 On all the multitude a nectarous dew.
 The oose-born Goddess beckoned and drew
 Fair Scylla and her guides to conference :
 And when they reach'd the throned eminence 895
 She kiss'd the sea-nymph's cheek, — who sat her down
 A-toying with the doves. Then, — “Mighty crown
 And sceptre of this kingdom !” Venus said,
 “Thy vows were on a time to Nais paid :
 Behold !” — Two copious tear-drops instant fell 900
 From the God's large eyes ; he smil'd delectable,
 And over Glaucus held his blessing hands. —
 “Endymion ! Ah ! still wandering in the bands
 Of love ? Now this is cruel. Since the hour
 I met thee in earth's bosom, all my power 905
 Have I put forth to serve thee. What, not yet
 Escap'd from dull mortality's harsh net ?
 A little patience, youth ! 't will not be long,
 Or I am skillless quite. An idle tongue,
 A humid eye, and steps luxurious, 910
 Where these are new and strange, are ominous.
 Aye, I have seen these signs in one of heaven,
 When others were all blind : and were I given
 To utter secrets, haply I might say
 Some pleasant words : — but Love will have his day. 915
 So wait awhile expectant. Pr'ythee soon,
 Even in the passing of thine honey-moon,
 Visit thou my Cythera : thou wilt find
 Cupid well-natur'd, my Adonis kind :
 And pray persuade with thee — Ah, I have done, 920

All blisses be upon thee, my sweet son!" —
 Thus the fair goddess : while Endymion
 Knelt to receive those accents halcyon.

Meantime a glorious revelry began
 Before the Water-Monarch. Nectar ran 925
 In courteous fountains to all cups outreach'd ;
 And plunder'd vines, teeming exhaustless, pleach'd
 New growth about each shell and pendent lyre ;
 The which, in disentangling for their fire,
 Pull'd down fresh foliage and coverture 930
 For dainty toying. Cupid, empire-sure,
 Flutter'd and laugh'd, and oft-times through the throng
 Made a delighted way. Then dance, and song,
 And garlanding grew wild ; and pleasure reign'd.
 In harmless tendril they each other chain'd, 935
 And strove who should be smother'd deepest in
 Fresh crush of leaves.

O 't is a very sin
 For one so weak to venture his poor verse
 In such a place as this. O do not curse,
 High Muses ! let him hurry to the ending. 940

All suddenly were silent. A soft blending
 Of dulcet instruments came charmingly ;
 And then a hymn.

" KING of the stormy sea !
 Brother of Jove, and co-inheritor
 Of elements ! Eternally before 945
 Thee the waves awful bow. Fast, stubborn rock,
 At thy fear'd trident shrinking, doth unlock
 Its deep foundations, hissing into foam.
 All mountain-rivers lost, in the wide home
 Of thy capacious bosom ever flow. 950

Thou frownest, and old Eolus thy foe
 Skulks to his cavern, 'mid the gruff complaint
 Of all his rebel tempests. Dark clouds faint
 When, from thy diadem, a silver gleam
 Slants over blue dominion. Thy bright team 955
 Gulfs in the morning light, and scuds along
 To bring thee nearer to that golden song
 Apollo singeth, while his chariot
 Waits at the doors of heaven. 'Thou art not
 For scenes like this ; an empire stern hast thou ; 960
 And it hath furrow'd that large front : yet now,
 As newly come of heaven, dost thou sit
 To blend and interknit
 Subdued majesty with this glad time.
 O shell-borne King sublime ! 965
 We lay our hearts before thee evermore —
 We sing, and we adore !

" Breathe softly, flutes ;
 Be tender of your strings, ye soothing lutes ;
 Nor be the trumpet heard ! O vain, O vain ; 970
 Not flowers budding in an April rain,
 Nor breath of sleeping dove, nor river's flow, —
 No, nor the Eolian twang of Love's own bow,
 Can mingle music fit for the soft ear
 Of goddess Cytherea ! 975
 Yet deign, white Queen of Beauty, thy fair eyes
 On our souls' sacrifice.

" Bright-winged Child !
 Who has another care when thou hast smil'd ?
 Unfortunates on earth, we see at last 980
 All death-shadows, and glooms that overcast
 Our spirits, fann'd away by thy light pinions.
 O sweetest essence ! sweetest of all minions !

God of warm pulses, and dishevell'd hair,
 And panting bosoms bare ! 985
 Dear unseen light in darkness ! eclipser
 Of light in light ! delicious poisoner !
 Thy venom'd goblet will we quaff until
 We fill — we fill !
 And by thy Mother's lips —— ”

Was heard no more 990

For clamour, when the golden palace door
 Opened again, and from without, in shone
 A new magnificence. On oozy throne
 Smooth-moving came Oceanus the old,
 To take a latest glimpse at his sheep-fold, 995
 Before he went into his quiet cave
 To muse for ever — then a lucid wave,
 Scoop'd from its trembling sisters of mid-sea,
 Afloat, and pillowing up the majesty
 Of Doris, and the Egean seer, her spouse — 1000
 Next, on a dolphin, clad in laurel boughs,
 Theban Amphion leaning on his lute :
 His fingers went across it. — All were mute
 To gaze on Amphitrite, queen of pearls,
 And Thetis pearly too. —

The palace whirrs 1005

Around giddy Endymion ; seeing he
 Was there far strayed from mortality.
 He could not bear it — shut his eyes in vain ;
 Imagination gave a dizzier pain.
 “ Oh, I shall die ! sweet Venus, be my stay ! 1010
 Where is my lovely mistress ? Well-away !
 I die — I hear her voice — I feel my wing — ”
 At Neptune's feet he sank. A sudden ring
 Of Nereids were about him, in kind strife

To usher back his spirit into life : 1015
 But still he slept. At last they interwove
 Their cradling arms, and purpos'd to convey
 Towards a crystal bower far away.

Lo ! while slow carried through the pitying crowd,
 To his inward senses these words spake aloud ; 1020
 Written in star-light on the dark above :
 " *Dearest Endymion ! my entire love !*
How have I dwelt in fear of fate : 't is done —
Immortal bliss for me too hast thou won.
Arise then ! for the hen-dove shall not hatch 1025
Her ready eggs, before I 'll kissing snatch
Thee into endless heaven. Awake ! awake ! "

The youth at once arose : a placid lake
 Came quiet to his eyes ; and forest green,
 Cooler than all the wonders he had seen. 1030
 Lull'd with its simple song his fluttering breast.
 How happy once again in grassy nest !

BOOK IV.

MUSE of my native land ! loftiest Muse !
 O first-born on the mountains ! by the hues
 Of heaven on the spiritual air begot :
 Long didst thou sit alone in northern grot,
 While yet our England was a wolfish den ; 5
 Before our forests heard the talk of men ;
 Before the first of Druids was a child ; —
 Long didst thou sit amid our regions wild
 Rapt in a deep prophetic solitude.
 There came an eastern voice of solemn mood : — 10
 Yet wast thou patient. Then sang forth the Nine,
 Apollo's garland : — yet didst thou divine
 Such home-bred glory, that they cried in vain,
 " Come hither, Sister of the Island ! " Plain
 Spake fair Ausonia ; and once more she spake 15
 A higher summons : — still didst thou betake
 Thee to thy native hopes. O thou hast won
 A full accomplishment ! The thing is done.
 Which undone, these our latter days had risen
 On barren souls. Great Muse, thou know'st what prison 20
 Of flesh and bone curbs, and confines, and frets
 Our spirit's wings : despondency besets
 Our pillows ; and the fresh to-morrow morn
 Seems to give forth its light in very scorn
 Of our dull, uninspir'd, snail-paced lives. 25
 Long have I said, how happy he who shrives
 To thee ! But then I thought on poets gone,
 And could not pray : — nor can I now — so on
 I move to the end in lowliness of heart. —

" Ah, woe is me ! that I should fondly part 30
 From my dear native land ! Ah, foolish maid !
 Glad was the hour, when, with thee, myriads bade
 Adieu to Ganges and their pleasant fields !
 To one so friendless the clear freshet yields
 A bitter coolness ; the ripe grape is sour : 35
 Yet I would have, great gods ! but one short hour
 Of native air — let me but die at home."

Endymion to heaven's airy dome
 Was offering up a hecatomb of vows,
 When these words reach'd him. Whereupon he bows 40
 His head through thorny-green entanglement
 Of underwood, and to the sound is bent,
 Anxious as hind towards her hidden fawn.

" Is no one near to help me ? No fair dawn
 Of life from charitable voice ? No sweet saying 45
 To set my dull and sadden'd spirit playing ?
 No hand to toy with mine ? No lips so sweet
 That I may worship them ? No eyelids meet
 To twinkle on my bosom ? No one dies
 Before me, till from these enslaving eyes 50
 Redemption sparkles ! — I am sad and lost."

Thou, Carian lord, hadst better have been tost
 Into a whirlpool. Vanish into air,
 Warm mountaineer ! for canst thou only bear
 A woman's sigh alone and in distress ? 55
 See not her charms ! Is Phœbe passionless ?
 Phœbe is fairer far — O gaze no more : —
 Yet if thou wilt behold all beauty's store,
 Behold her panting in the forest grass !
 Do not those curls of glossy jet surpass 60
 For tenderness the arms so idly lain
 Amongst them ? Feelest not a kindred pain,

To see such lovely eyes in swimming search
 After some warm delight, that seems to perch
 Dovelike in the dim cell lying beyond 65
 Their upper lids? — Hist!

“O for Hermes’ wand,
 To touch this flower into human shape!
 That woodland Hyacinthus could escape
 From his green prison, and here kneeling down
 Call me his queen, his second life’s fair crown! 70
 Ah me, how I could love! — My soul doth melt
 For the unhappy youth — Love! I have felt
 So faint a kindness, such a meek surrender
 To what my own full thoughts had made too tender,
 That but for tears my life had fled away! — 75
 Ye deaf and senseless minutes of the day,
 And thou, old forest, hold ye this for true,
 There is no lightning, no authentic dew
 But in the eye of love : there’s not a sound,
 Melodious howsoever, can confound 80
 The heavens and earth in one to such a death
 As doth the voice of love : there’s not a breath
 Will mingle kindly with the meadow air,
 Till it has panted round, and stolen a share
 Of passion from the heart!” —

Upon a bough 85
 He leant, wretched. He surely cannot now
 Thirst for another love : O impious,
 That he can even dream upon it thus! —
 Thought he, “Why am I not as are the dead,
 Since to a woe like this I have been led 90
 Through the dark earth, and through the wondrous sea?
 Goddess! I love thee not the less : from thee

By Juno's smile I turn not — no, no, no —
 While the great waters are at ebb and flow. —
 I have a triple soul ! O fond pretence — 95
 For both, for both my love is so immense,
 I feel my heart is cut for them in twain."

And so he groan'd, as one by beauty slain.
 The lady's heart beat quick, and he could see
 Her gentle bosom heave tumultuously. 100
 He sprang from his green covert : there she lay,
 Sweet as a muskrose upon new-made hay ;
 With all her limbs on tremble, and her eyes
 Shut softly up alive. To speak he tries.
 " Fair damsel, pity me ! forgive that I 105
 Thus violate thy bower's sanctity !
 O pardon me, for I am full of grief —
 Grief born of thee, young angel ! fairest thief !
 Who stolen hast away the wings wherewith
 I was to top the heavens. Dear maid, sith 110
 Thou art my executioner, and I feel
 Loving and hatred, misery and weal,
 Will in a few short hours be nothing to me,
 And all my story that much passion slew me ;
 Do smile upon the evening of my days : 115
 And, for my tortur'd brain begins to craze,
 Be thou my nurse ; and let me understand
 How dying I shall kiss that lily hand. —
 Dost weep for me ? Then should I be content.
 Scowl on, ye fates ! until the firmament 120
 Outblackens Erebus, and the full-cavern'd earth
 Crumbles into itself. By the cloud girth
 Of Jove, those tears have given me a thirst
 To meet oblivion." — As her heart would burst
 The maiden sobb'd awhile, and then replied : 125

"Why must such desolation betide
 As that thou speak'st of? Are not these green nooks
 Empty of all misfortune? Do the brooks
 Utter a gorgon voice? Does yonder thrush,
 Schooling its half-fledg'd little ones to brush 130
 About the dewy forest, whisper tales? —
 Speak not of grief, young stranger, or cold snails
 Will slime the rose to-night. Though if thou wilt,
 Methinks 't would be a guilt — a very guilt —
 Not to companion thee, and sigh away 135
 The light — the dusk — the dark — till break of day!"
 "Dear lady," said Endymion, "'t is past :
 I love thee ! and my days can never last.
 That I may pass in patience still speak :
 Let me have music dying, and I seek 140
 No more delight — I bid adieu to all.
 Didst thou not after other climates call,
 And murmur about Indian streams?" — Then she,
 Sitting beneath the midmost forest tree,
 For pity sang this roundelay — 145

"O Sorrow,
 Why dost borrow
 The natural hue of health, from vermeil lips? —
 To give maiden blushes
 To the white rose bushes? 150
 Or is it thy dewy hand the daisy tips?

"O Sorrow,
 Why dost borrow
 The lustrous passion from a falcon-eye? —
 To give the glow-worm light? 155
 Or, on a moonless night,
 To tinge, on syren shores, the salt sea-spry?

"O Sorrow,
 Why dost borrow
 The mellow ditties from a mourning tongue? — 160
 To give at evening pale
 Unto the nightingale,
 That thou mayst listen the cold dews among?

"O Sorrow,
 Why dost borrow 165
 Heart's lightness from the merriment of May? —
 A lover would not tread
 A cowslip on the head.
 Though he should dance from eve till peep of day —
 Nor any drooping flower 170
 Held sacred for thy bower,
 Wherever he may sport himself and play.

"To Sorrow,
 I bade good-morrow,
 And thought to leave her far away behind; 175
 But cheerly, cheerly,
 She loves me dearly;
 She is so constant to me, and so kind:
 I would deceive her
 And so leave her, 180
 But ah! she is so constant and so kind.

"Beneath my palm trees, by the river side,
 I sat a-weeping: in the whole world wide
 There was no one to ask me why I wept, —
 And so I kept 185
 Brimming the water-lily cups with tears
 Cold as my fears.

"Beneath my palm trees, by the river side,
 I sat a-weeping: what enamour'd bride,

Cheated by shadowy wooer from the clouds, 190
 But hides and shrouds
 Beneath dark palm trees by a river side ?

“ And as I sat, over the light blue hills
 There came a noise of revellers : the rills
 Into the wide stream came of purple hue — 195

’T was Bacchus and his crew !
 The earnest trumpet spake, and silver thrills
 From kissing cymbals made a merry din —

’T was Bacchus and his kin !
 Like to a moving vintage down they came, 200
 Crown’d with green leaves, and faces all on flame ;
 All madly dancing through the pleasant valley,

To scare thee, Melancholy !
 O then, O then, thou wast a simple name !
 And I forgot thee, as the berried holly 205
 By shepherds is forgotten, when, in June,
 Tall chestnuts keep away the sun and moon : —
 I rush’d into the folly !

“ Within his car, aloft, young Bacchus stood,
 Trifling his ivy-dart, in dancing mood, 210
 With sidelong laughing ;

And little rills of crimson wine imbrued
 His plump white arms, and shoulders, enough white
 For Venus’ pearly bite ;

And near him rode Silenus on his ass, 215
 Pelted with flowers as he on did pass
 Tipsily quaffing.

“ Whence came ye, merry Damsels ! whence came ye !
 So many, and so many, and such glee ?
 Why have ye left your bowers desolate, 220
 Your lutes, and gentler fate ? —

‘ We follow Bacchus! Bacchus on the wing,
 A-conquering !
 Bacchus, young Bacchus ! good or ill betide,
 We dance before him thorough kingdoms wide : — 225
 Come hither, lady fair, and joined be
 To our wild minstrelsy !’

“ Whence came ye, jolly Satyrs ! whence came ye !
 So many, and so many, and such glee ?
 Why have ye left your forest haunts, why left 230
 Your nuts in oak-tree cleft ? —
 ‘ For wine, for wine we left our kernel tree ;
 For wine we left our heath, and yellow brooms,
 And cold mushrooms ;
 For wine we follow Bacchus through the earth : 235
 Great God of breathless cups and chirping mirth ! —
 Come hither, lady fair, and joined be
 To our mad minstrelsy !’

“ Over wide streams and mountains great we went,
 And, save when Bacchus kept his ivy tent, 240
 Onward the tiger and the leopard pants,
 With Asian elephants :
 Onward these myriads — with song and dance,
 With zebras striped, and sleek Arabians’ prance,
 Web-footed alligators, crocodiles, 245
 Bearing upon their scaly backs, in files,
 Plump infant laughers mimicking the coil
 Of seamen, and stout galley-rowers’ toil :
 With toying oars and silken sails they glide,
 Nor care for wind and tide. 250

“ Mounted on panthers’ furs and lions’ manes,
 From rear to van they scour about the plains ;

A three days' journey in a moment done :
 And always, at the rising of the sun,
 About the wilds they hunt with spear and horn, 255
 On spleenful unicorn.

"I saw Osirian Egypt kneel adown
 Before the vine-wreath crown !
 I saw parch'd Abyssinia rouse and sing
 To the silver cymbals' ring ! 260
 I saw the whelming vintage hotly pierce
 Old Tartary the fierce !

The kings of Inde their jewel-sceptres veil,
 And from their treasures scatter pearled hail ;
 Great Brahma from his mystic heaven groans, 265
 And all his priesthood moans ;

Before young Bacchus' eye-wink turning pale. —
 Into these regions came I following him,
 Sick-hearted, weary — so I took a whim
 To stray away into these forests drear 270
 Alone, without a peer :

And I have told thee all thou mayest hear.

 " Young stranger !
 I've been a ranger
 In search of pleasure throughout every clime : 275
 Alas ! 't is not for me !
 Bewitch'd I sure must be,
 To lose in grieving all my maiden prime.

 " Come then, Sorrow !
 Sweetest Sorrow ! 280
 Like an own babe I nurse thee on my breast :
 I thought to leave thee
 And deceive thee,
 But now of all the world I love thee best.

"There is not one, 285
 No, no, not one
 But thee to comfort a poor lonely maid ;
 Thou art her mother,
 And her brother,
 Her playmate, and her wooer in the shade." 290

O what a sigh she gave in finishing,
 And look, quite dead to every worldly thing !
 Endymion could not speak, but gaz'd on her ;
 And listened to the wind that now did stir
 About the crisped oaks full drearily, 295
 Yet with as sweet a softness as might be
 Remember'd from its velvet summer song.
 At last he said : " Poor lady, how thus long
 Have I been able to endure that voice ?
 Fair Melody ! kind Syren ! I 've no choice ; 300
 I must be thy sad servant evermore :
 I cannot choose but kneel here and adore.
 Alas, I must not think — by Phœbe, no !
 Let me not think, soft Angel ! shall it be so ?
 Say, beautifullest, shall I never think ? 305
 O thou could'st foster me beyond the brink
 Of recollection ! make my watchful care
 Close up its bloodshot eyes, nor see despair !
 Do gently murder half my soul, and I
 Shall feel the other half so utterly ! 310
 I 'm giddy at that cheek so fair and smooth ;
 O let it blush so ever ! let it soothe
 My madness ! let it mantle rosy-warm
 With the tinge of love, panting in safe alarm. —
 This cannot be thy hand, and yet it is : 315
 And this is sure thine other softling — this
 Thine own fair bosom, and I am so near !

Wilt fall asleep? O let me sip that tear!
 And whisper one sweet word that I may know
 'This is this world — sweet dewy blossom!' — *Woe!* 320
Woe! *Woe to that Endymion! Where is he?* —
 Even these words went echoing dimly
 Through the wide forest — a most fearful tone,
 Like one repenting in his latest moan;
 And while it died away a shade pass'd by, 325
 As of a thunder cloud. When arrows fly
 Through the thick branches, poor ring-doves sleek forth
 Their timid necks and tremble; so these both
 Leant to each other trembling, and sat so
 Waiting for some destruction — when lo, 330
 Foot-feather'd Mercury appear'd sublime
 Beyond the tall tree tops; and in less time
 Than shoots the slanted hail-storm, down he dropt
 Towards the ground; but rested not, nor stopt
 One moment from his home: only the sword 335
 He with his wand light touch'd, and heavenward
 Swifter than sight was gone — even before
 The teeming earth a sudden witness bore
 Of his swift magic. Diving swans appear
 Above the crystal circlings white and clear; 340
 And catch the cheated eye in wide surprise,
 How they can dive in sight and unseen rise —
 So from the turf outsprang two steeds jet-black,
 Each with large dark blue wings upon his back.
 The youth of Caria plac'd the lovely dame 345
 On one, and felt himself in spleen to tame
 The other's fierceness. Through the air they flew,
 High as the eagles. Like two drops of dew
 Exhal'd to Phœbus' lips, away they are gone,
 Far from the earth away — unseen, alone. 350
 Among cool clouds and winds, but that the free,

The buoyant life of song can floating be
 Above their heads, and follow them untir'd. —
 Muse of my native land, am I inspir'd ?
 This is the giddy air, and I must spread 355
 Wide pinions to keep here ; nor do I dread
 Or height, or depth, or width, or any chance
 Precipitous : I have beneath my glance
 Those towering horses and their mournful freight.
 Could I thus sail, and see, and thus await 360
 Fearless for power of thought, without thine aid ? —
 There is a sleepy dusk, an odorous shade
 From some approaching wonder, and behold
 Those winged steeds, with snorting nostrils bold
 Snuff at its faint extreme, and seem to tire, 365
 Dying to embers from their native fire !

~~There curl'd a purple mist around them :~~ soon,
 It seem'd as when around the pale new moon
 Sad Zephyr droops the clouds like weeping willow :
 'T was Sleep slow journeying with head on pillow. 370
 For the first time, since he came nigh dead born
 From the old womb of night, his cave forlorn
 Had he left more forlorn : for the first time,
 He felt aloof the day and morning's prime —
 Because into his depth Cimmerian 375
 There came a dream, showing how a young man,
 Ere a lean bat could plump its wintery skin,
 Would at high Jove's empyreal footstool win
 An immortality, and how espouse
 Jove's daughter, and be reckon'd of his house. 380
 Now was he slumbering towards heaven's gate,
 That he might at the threshold one hour wait
 To hear the marriage melodies, and then
 Sink downward to his dusky cave again.

His litter of smooth semiluculent mist, 385
 Diversly ting'd with rose and amethyst,
 Puzzled those eyes that for the centre sought ;
 And scarcely for one moment could be caught
 His sluggish form reposing motionless.
 Those two on winged steeds, with all the stress 390
 Of vision search'd for him, as one would look
 Athwart the shallows of a river nook
 To catch a glance at silver throated eels, —
 Or from old Skiddaw's top, when fog conceals
 His rugged forehead in a mantle pale, 395
 With an eye-guess towards some pleasant vale
 Descry a favourite hamlet faint and far.

These raven horses, though they foster'd are
 Of earth's splenetic fire, dully drop
 Their full-veined ears, nostrils blood wide, and stop ; 400
 Upon the spiritless mist have they outspread
 Their ample feathers, are in slumber dead, —
 And on those pinions, level in mid air,
 Endymion sleepeth and the lady fair.
 Slowly they sail, slowly as icy isle 405
 Upon a calm sea drifting : and meanwhile
 The mournful wanderer dreams. Behold ! he walks
 On heaven's pavement ; brotherly he talks
 To divine powers : from his hand full fain
 Juno's proud birds are pecking pearly grain : 410
 He tries the nerve of Phœbus' golden bow,
 And asketh where the golden apples grow :
 Upon his arm he braces Pallas' shield,
 And tries in vain to unsettle and wield
 A Jovian thunderbolt : arch Hebe brings 415
 A full-brimm'd goblet, dances lightly, sings
 And tantalizes long ; at last he drinks,

And lost in pleasure at her feet he sinks,
 Touching with dazzled lips her starlight hand.
 He blows a bugle, — an ethereal band 420
 Are visible above : the Seasons four, —
 Green-kirtled Spring, flush Summer, golden store
 In Autumn's sickle, Winter frosty hoar,
 Join dance with shadowy Hours ; while still the blast,
 In swells unmitigated, still doth last 425
 To sway their floating morris. " Whose is this ?
 Whose bugle ? " he inquires : they smile : " O Dis !
 Why is this mortal here ? Dost thou not know
 Its mistress' lips ? Not thou ? — 'Tis Dian's : lo !
 She rises crescented ! " He looks, 't is she, 430
 His very goddess : good-bye earth, and sea,
 And air, and pains, and care, and suffering ;
 Good-bye to all but love ! Then doth he spring
 Towards her, and awakes — and, strange, o'erhead,
 Of those same fragrant exhalations bred, 435
 Beheld awake his very dream : the gods
 Stood smiling ; merry Hebe laughs and nods ;
 And Phœbe bends towards him crescented.
 O state perplexing ! On the pinion bed,
 Too well awake, he feels the panting side 440
 Of his delicious lady. He who died
 For soaring too audacious in the sun,
 When that same treacherous wax began to run,
 Felt not more tongue-tied than Endymion.
 His heart leapt up as to its rightful throne, 445
 To that fair shadow'd passion puls'd its way —
 Ah, what perplexity ! Ah, well a day !
 So fond, so beauteous was his bed-fellow,
 He could not help but kiss her : then he grew
 Awhile forgetful of all beauty save 450
 Young Phœbe's, golden hair'd ; and so 'gan crave

Forgiveness : yet he turn'd once more to look
 At the sweet sleeper, — all his soul was shook, —
 She press'd his hand in slumber ; so once more
 He could not help but kiss her and adore. 455
 At this the shadow wept, melting away.
 The Latmian started up: " Bright goddess, stay !
 Search my most hidden breast ! By truth's own tongue,
 I have no dædale heart : why is it wrung
 To desperation ? Is there nought for me, 460
 Upon the bourne of bliss, but misery ? "

These words awoke the stranger of dark tresses :
 Her dawning love-look rapt Endymion blesses
 With 'haviour soft. Sleep yawned from underneath.
 " Thou swan of Ganges, let us no more breathe 465
 This murky phantasm ! thou contented seem'st
 Pillow'd in lovely idleness, nor dream'st
 What horrors may discomfort thee and me.
 Ah, shouldst thou die from my heart-treachery ! —
 Yet did she merely weep — her gentle soul 470
 Hath no revenge in it : as it is whole
 In tenderness, would I were whole in love !
 Can I prize thee, fair maid, all price above,
 Even when I feel as true as innocence ?
 I do, I do. — What is this soul then ? Whence 475
 Came it ? It does not seem my own, and I
 Have no self-passion or identity.
 Some fearful end must be : where, where is it ?
 By Nemesis, I see my spirit flit
 Alone about the dark. — Forgive me, sweet : 480
 Shall we away ? " He rous'd the steeds : they beat
 Their wings chivalrous into the clear air,
 Leaving old Sleep within his vapoury lair.

The good-night blush of eve was waning slow,
 And Vesper, risen star, began to throe 485
 In the dusk heavens silvery, when they
 Thus sprang direct towards the Galaxy.
 Nor did speed hinder converse soft and strange —
 Eternal oaths and vows they interchange,
 In such wise, in such temper, so aloof 490
 Up in the winds, beneath a starry roof,
 So witless of their doom, that verily
 'T is wellnigh past man's search their hearts to see ;
 Whether they wept, or laugh'd, or griev'd, or toy'd —
 Most like with joy gone mad, with sorrow cloy'd. 495

Full facing their swift flight, from ebon streak,
 The moon put forth a little diamond peak,
 No bigger than an unobserved star,
 Or tiny point of fairy scymetar ;
 Bright signal that she only stoop'd to tie 500
 Her silver sandals, ere deliciously
 She bow'd into the heavens her timid head
 Slowly she rose, as though she would have fled,
 While to his lady meek the Carian turn'd,
 To mark if her dark eyes had yet discern'd 505
 This beauty in its birth. — Despair ! despair !
 He saw her body fading gaunt and spare
 In the cold moonshine. Straight he seiz'd her wrist ;
 It melted from his grasp ; her hand he kiss'd,
 And, horror ! kiss'd his own — he was alone. 510
 Her steed a little higher soar'd, and then
 Dropt hawkwise to the earth.

There lies a den,
 Beyond the seeming confines of the space
 Made for the soul to wander in and trace
 Its own existence, of remotest glooms. 515

Dark regions are around it, where the tombs
 Of buried griefs the spirit sees, but scarce
 One hour doth linger weeping, for the pierce
 Of new-born woe it feels more inly smart :
 And in these regions many a venom'd dart 520
 At random flies ; they are the proper home
 Of every ill : the man is yet to come
 Who hath not journeyed in this native hell.
 But few have ever felt how calm and well
 Sleep may be had in that deep den of all. 525
 There anguish does not sting ; nor pleasure pall :
 Woe-hurricanes beat ever at the gate,
 Yet all is still within and desolate.
 Beset with painful gusts, within ye hear
 No sound so loud as when on curtain'd bier 530
 The death-watch tick is stifled. Enter none
 Who strive therefore : on the sudden it is won.
 Just when the sufferer begins to burn,
 Then it is free to him ; and from an urn,
 Still fed by melting ice, he takes a draught — 535
 Young Semele such richness never quaff
 In her maternal longing. Happy gloom !
 Dark Paradise ! where pale becomes the bloom
 Of health by due ; where silence dreariest
 Is most articulate ; where hopes infest ; 540
 Where those eyes are the brightest far that keep
 Their lids shut longest in a dreamless sleep.
 O happy spirit-home ! O wondrous soul !
 Pregnant with such a den to save the whole
 In thine own depth. Hail, gentle Carian ! 545
 For, never since thy griefs and woes began,
 Hast thou felt so content : a grievous feud
 Hath let thee to this Cave of Quietude.
 Aye, his lull'd soul was there, although upborne

With dangerous speed : and so he did not mourn 550
 Because he knew not whither he was going.
 So happy was he, not the aerial blowing
 Of trumpets at clear parley from the east
 Could rouse from that fine relish, that high feast.
 They stung the feather'd horse : with fierce alarm 555
 He flapp'd towards the sound. Alas, no charm
 Could lift Endymion's head, or he had view'd
 A skyey mask, a pinion'd multitude, —
 And silvery was its passing : voices sweet
 Warbling the while as if to lull and greet 560
 The wanderer in his path. Thus warbled they,
 While past the vision went in bright array.

“ Who, who from Dian's feast would be away ?
 For all the golden bowers of the day
 Are empty left ? Who, who away would be 565
 From Cynthia's wedding and festivity ?
 Not Hesperus : lo ! upon his silver wings
 He leans away for highest heaven and sings,
 Snapping his lucid fingers merrily ! —
 Ah, Zephyrus ! art here, and Flora too ! 570
 Ye tender bibbers of the rain and dew,
 Young playmates of the rose and daffodil,
 Be careful, ere ye enter in, to fill
 Your baskets high
 With fennel green, and balm, and golden pines, 575
 Savory, latter-mint, and columbines,
 Cool parsley, basil sweet, and sunny thyme ;
 Yea, every flower and leaf of every clime,
 All gather'd in the dewy morning : hie
 Away ! fly, fly ! — 580
 Crystalline brother of the belt of heaven,
 Aquarius ! to whom king Jove has given

Through dangerous winds, had but my footsteps worn
 A path in hell, for ever would I bless
 Horrors which nourish an uneasiness
 For my own sullen conquering ; to him
 Who lives beyond earth's boundary, grief is dim, 620
 Sorrow is but a shadow : now I see
 The grass ; I feel the solid ground — Ah, me !
 It is thy voice — divinest ! Where? — who? who
 Left thee so quiet on this bed of dew ?
 Behold upon this happy earth we are ; 625
 Let us ay love each other ; let us fare
 On forest-fruits, and never, never go
 Among the abodes of mortals here below,
 Or be by phantoms duped. O destiny !
 Into a labyrinth now my soul would fly, 630
 But with thy beauty will I deaden it.
 Where didst thou melt to? By thee will I sit
 For ever : let our fate stop here — a kid
 I on this spot will offer : Pan will bid
 Us live in peace, in love and peace among 635
 His forest wildernesses. I have clung
 To nothing, lov'd a nothing, nothing seen
 Or felt but a great dream ! O I have been
 Presumptuous against love, against the sky,
 Against all elements, against the tie 640
 Of mortals each to each, against the blooms
 Of flowers, rush of rivers, and the tombs
 Of heroes gone ! Against his proper glory
 Has my own soul conspired : so my story
 Will I to children utter, and repent. 645
 There never liv'd a mortal man, who bent
 His appetite beyond his natural sphere.
 But starv'd and died. My sweetest Indian, here,
 Here will I kneel, for thou redeemed hast

My life from too thin breathing : gone and past 650
 Are cloudy phantasms. Caverns lone, farewell !
 And air of visions, and the monstrous swell
 Of visionary seas ! No, never more
 Shall airy voices cheat me to the shore
 Of tangled wonder, breathless and aghast. 655
 Adieu, my daintiest Dream ! although so vast
 My love is still for thee. The hour may come
 When we shall meet in pure elysium.
 On earth I may not love thee ; and therefore
 Doves will I offer up, and sweetest store 660
 All through the teeming year : so thou wilt shine
 On me, and on this damsel fair of mine,
 And bless our simple lives. My Indian bliss !
 My river-lily bud ! one human kiss !
 One sigh of real breath — one gentle squeeze, 665
 Warm as a dove's nest among summer trees,
 And warm with dew at ooze from living blood !
 Whither didst melt ? Ah, what of that ! — all good
 We'll talk about — no more of dreaming. — Now,
 Where shall our dwelling be ? Under the brow 670
 Of some steep mossy hill, where ivy dun
 Would hide us up, although spring leaves were none ;
 And where dark yew trees, as we rustle through,
 Will drop their scarlet berry cups of dew ?
 O thou wouldst joy to live in such a place ; 675
 Dusk for our loves, yet light enough to grace
 Those gentle limbs on mossy bed reclin'd :
 For by one step the blue sky shouldst thou find,
 And by another, in deep dell below
 See, through the trees, a little river go 680
 All in its mid-day gold and glimmering.
 Honey from out the gnarled hive I'll bring,
 And apples, wan with sweetness, gather thee, —

Cresses that grow where no man may them see,
 And sorrel untorn by the dew-claw'd stag : 685
 Pipes will I fashion of the syrinx flag,
 That thou mayst always know whither I roam,
 When I shall please thee in our quiet home
 To listen and think of love. Still let me speak ;
 Still let me dive into the joy I seek, — 690
 For yet the past doth prison me. The rill,
 Thou haply mayst delight in, will I fill
 With fairy fishes from the mountain tarn,
 And thou shalt feed them from the squirrel's barn.
 Its bottom will I strew with amber shells, 695
 And pebbles blue from deep enchanted wells.
 Its sides I'll plant with dew-sweet eglantine,
 And honeysuckles full of clear bee-wine.
 I will entice this crystal rill to trace
 Love's silver name upon the meadow's face. 700
 I'll kneel to Vesta, for a flame of fire ;
 And to god Phœbus, for a golden lyre ;
 To Empress Dian, for a hunting spear ;
 To Vesper, for a taper silver-clear,
 That I may see thy beauty through the night ; 705
 To Flora, and a nightingale shall light
 Tame on thy finger ; to the River-gods,
 And they shall bring thee taper fishing-rods
 Of gold, and lines of Naiads' long bright tress.
 Heaven shield thee for thine utter loveliness ! 710
 Thy mossy footstool shall the altar be
 'Fore which I'll bend, bending, dear love, to thee :
 Those lips shall be my Delphos, and shall speak
 Laws to my footsteps, colour to my cheek,
 Trembling or steadfastness to this same voice, 715
 And of three sweetest pleasurings the choice :
 And that affectionate light, those diamond things,

Those eyes, those passions, those supreme pearl springs,
 Shall be my grief, or twinkle me to pleasure.
 Say, is not bliss within our perfect seisure? 720
 O that I could not doubt!"

The mountaineer

Thus strove by fancies vain and crude to clear
 His briar'd path to some tranquillity.
 It gave bright gladness to his lady's eye,
 And yet the tears she wept were tears of sorrow ; 725
 Answering thus, just as the golden morrow
 Beam'd upward from the valleys of the east :
 " O that the flutter of this heart had ceas'd,
 Or the sweet name of love had pass'd away.
 Young feather'd tyrant ! by a swift decay 730
 Wilt thou devote this body to the earth :
 And I do think that at my very birth
 I lisp'd thy blooming titles inwardly ;
 For at the first, first dawn and thought of thee,
 With uplift hands I blest the stars of heaven. 735
 Art thou not cruel ? Ever have I striven
 To think thee kind, but ah, it will not do !
 When yet a child, I heard that kisses drew
 Favour from thee, and so I kisses gave
 To the void air, bidding them find out love : 740
 But when I came to feel how far above
 All fancy, pride, and fickle maidenhood,
 All earthly pleasure, all imagin'd good,
 Was the warm tremble of a devout kiss, —
 Even then, that moment, at the thought of this, 745
 Fainting I fell into a bed of flowers,
 And languish'd there three days. Ye milder powers,
 Am I not cruelly wrong'd ? Believe, believe
 Me, dear Endymion, were I to weave

With my own fancies garlands of sweet life, 750
 Thou shouldst be one of all. Ah, bitter strife!
 I may not be thy love : I am forbidden —
 Indeed I am — thwarted, affrighted, chidden,
 By things I trembled at, and gorgon wrath.
 Twice hast thou asked whither I went : henceforth 755
 Ask me no more ! I may not utter it,
 Nor may I be thy love. We might commit
 Ourselves at once to vengeance ; we might die ;
 We might embrace and die : voluptuous thought !
 Enlarge not to my hunger, or I 'm caught 760
 In trammels of perverse deliciousness.
 No, no, that shall not be : thee will I bless,
 And bid a long adieu."

The Carian

No word return'd : both lovelorn, silent, wan,
 Into the valleys green together went. 765
 Far wandering, they were perforce content
 To sit beneath a fair lone beechen tree ;
 Nor at each other gaz'd, but heavily
 Por'd on its hazel cirque of shedded leaves.

Endymion ! unhappy ! it nigh grieves 770
 Me to behold thee thus in last extreme :
 Ensky'd ere this, but truly that I deem
 Truth the best music in a first-born song.
 Thy lute-voic'd brother will I sing ere long,
 And thou shalt aid — hast thou not aided me ? 775
 Yes, moonlight Emperor ! felicity
 Has been thy meed for many thousand years ;
 Yet often have I, on the brink of tears,
 Mourn'd as if yet thou wert a forester ; —
 Forgetting the old tale.

He did not stir 780
 His eyes from the dead leaves, or one small pulse
 Of joy he might have felt. The spirit culls
 Unfaded amaranth, when wild it strays
 Through the old garden-ground of boyish days.
 A little onward ran the very stream 785
 By which he took his first soft poppy dream ;
 And on the very bark 'gainst which he leant
 A crescent he had carv'd, and round it spent
 His skill in little stars. The teeming tree
 Had swollen and green'd the pious charactery, 790
 But not ta'en out. Why, there was not a slope
 Up which he had not fear'd the antelope ;
 And not a tree beneath whose rooty shade
 He had not with his tamed leopards play'd.
 Nor could an arrow light, or javelin, 795
 Fly in the air where his had never been —
 And yet he knew it not.

O treachery !
 Why does his lady smile, pleasing her eye
 With all his sorrowing ? He sees her not.
 But who so stares on him ! His sister sure ! 800
 Peona of the woods !— Can she endure —
 Impossible — how dearly they embrace !
 His lady smiles ; delight is in her face ;
 It is no treachery.

“ Dear brother mine !
 Endymion, weep not so ! Why shouldst thou pine 805
 When all great Latmos so exalt wilt be ?
 Thank the great gods, and look not bitterly ;
 And speak not one pale word, and sigh no more.
 Sure I will not believe thou hast such store
 Of grief, to last thee to my kiss again. 810

Thou surely canst not bear a mind in pain,
 Come hand in hand with one so beautiful.
 Be happy both of you ! for I will pull
 The flowers of autumn for your coronals.
 Pan's holy priest for young Endymion calls ; 815
 And when he is restor'd, thou, fairest dame,
 Shalt be our queen. Now, is it not a shame
 To see ye thus, — not very, very sad ?
 Perhaps ye are too happy to be glad :
 O feel as if it were a common day ; 820
 Free-voic'd as one who never was away.
 No tongue shall ask, whence come ye ? but ye shall
 Be gods of your own rest imperial.
 Not even I, for one whole month, will pry
 Into the hours that have pass'd us by, 825
 Since in my arbour I did sing to thee.
 O Hermes ! on this very night will be
 A hymning up to Cynthia, queen of light ;
 For the soothsayers old saw yesternight
 Good visions in the air, — whence will befall, 830
 As say these sages, health perpetual
 To shepherds and their flocks ; and furthermore,
 In Dian's face they read the gentle lore :
 Therefore for her these vesper-carols are.
 Our friends will all be there from nigh and far. 835
 Many upon thy death have ditties made ;
 And many, even now, their foreheads shade
 With cypress, on a day of sacrifice.
 New singing for our maids shalt thou devise,
 And pluck the sorrow from our huntsmen's brows. 840
 Tell me, my lady-queen, how to espouse
 This wayward brother to his rightful joys !
 His eyes are on thee bent, as thou didst poise
 His fate most goddess-like. Help me, I pray,

To lure — Endymion, dear brother, say 845
 What ails thee ? ” He could bear no more, and so
 Bent his soul fiercely like a spiritual bow,
 And twang'd it inwardly, and calmly said :
 “ I would have thee my only friend, sweet maid !
 My only visitor ! not ignorant though, 850
 That those deceptions which for pleasure go
 'Mong men, are pleasures real as real may be :
 But there are higher ones I may not see,
 If impiously an earthly realm I take.
 Since I saw thee, I have been wide awake 855
 Night after night, and day by day, until
 Of the empyrean I have drunk my fill.
 Let it content thee, Sister, seeing me
 More happy than betides mortality.
 A hermit young, I 'll live in mossy cave, 860
 Where thou alone shalt come to me, and lave
 Thy spirit in the wonders I shall tell.
 Through me the shepherd realm shall prosper well ;
 For to thy tongue will I all health confide.
 And, for my sake, let this young maid abide 865
 With thee as a dear sister. Thou alone,
 Peona, mayst return to me. I own
 This may sound strangely : but when, dearest girl,
 Thou seest it for my happiness, no pearl
 Will trespass down those cheeks. Companion fair ! 870
 Wilt be content to dwell with her, to share
 This sister's love with me ? ” Like one resign'd
 And bent by circumstance, and thereby blind
 In self-commitment, thus that meek unknown :
 “ Aye, but a buzzing by my ears has flown, 875
 Of jubilee to Dian: — truth I heard ?
 Well then, I see there is no little bird,
 Tender soever, but is Jove's own care.

Long have I sought for rest, and, unaware,
 Behold I find it ! so exalted too ! 880
 So after my own heart ! I knew, I knew
 There was a place untenanted in it :
 In that same void white Chastity shall sit,
 And monitor me nightly to lone slumber.
 With sanest lips I vow me to the number 885
 Of Dian's sisterhood ; and, kind lady,
 With thy good help, this very night shall see
 My future days to her fane consecrate."

As feels a dreamer what doth most create
 His own particular fright, so these three felt : 890
 Or like one who, in after ages, knelt
 To Lucifer or Baal, when he 'd pine
 After a little sleep : or when in mine
 Far under ground, a sleeper meets his friends
 Who know him not. Each diligently bends 895
 Towards common thoughts and things for very fear ;
 Striving their ghastly malady to cheer,
 By thinking it a thing of yes and no,
 That housewives talk of. But the spirit-blow
 Was struck, and all were dreamers. At the last 900
 Endymion said : " Are not our fates all cast ?
 Why stand we here ? Adieu, ye tender pair !
 Adieu ! " Whereat those maidens, with wild stare,
 Walk'd dizzily away. Pained and hot
 His eyes went after them, until they got 905
 Near to a cypress grove, whose deadly maw,
 In one swift moment, would what then he saw
 Engulf for ever. " Stay ! " he cried, " ah, stay !
 Turn, damsels ! hist ! one word I have to say.
 Sweet Indian, I would see thee once again. 910
 It is a thing I dote on : so I 'd fain,

Peona, ye should hand in hand repair
 Into those holy groves, that silent are
 Behind great Dian's temple. I'll be yon,
 At vesper's earliest twinkle — they are gone — 915
 But once, once, once again — " At this he press'd
 His hands against his face, and then did rest
 His head upon a mossy hillock green,
 And so remain'd as he a corpse had been
 All the long day ; save when he scantly lifted 920
 His eyes abroad, to see how shadows shifted
 With the slow move of time, — sluggish and weary
 Until the poplar tops, in journey dreary,
 Had reach'd the river's brim. Then up he rose,
 And, slowly as that very river flows, 925
 Walk'd towards the temple grove with this lament :
 "Why such a golden eve ? The breeze is sent
 Careful and soft, that not a leaf may fall
 Before the serene father of them all
 Bows down his summer head below the west. 930
 Now am I of breath, speech, and speed possest,
 But at the setting I must bid adieu
 To her for the last time. Night will strew
 On the damp grass myriads of lingering leaves,
 And with them shall I die ; nor much it grieves 935
 To die, when summer dies on the cold sward.
 Why, I have been a butterfly, a lord
 Of flowers, garlands, love-knots, silly posies,
 Groves, meadows, melodies, and arbour roses ;
 My kingdom 's at its death, and just it is 940
 That I should die with it : so in all this
 We miscall grief, bale, sorrow, heartbreak, woe,
 What is there to plain of ? By Titan's foe
 I am but rightly serv'd." So saying, he
 Tripp'd lightly on, in sort of deathful glee ; 945

Laughing at the clear stream and setting sun,
 As though they jests had been : nor had he done
 His laugh at nature's holy countenance,
 Until that grove appear'd, as if perchance,
 And then his tongue with sober seemlihed 950
 Gave utterance as he entered : " Ha ! " he said,
 " King of the butterflies ; but by this gloom,
 And by old Rhadamanthus' tongue of doom,
 This dusk religion, pomp of solitude,
 And the Promethean clay by thief endued, 955
 By old Saturnus' forelock, by his head
 Shook with eternal palsy, I did wed
 Myself to things of light from infancy ;
 And thus to be cast out, thus lorn to die,
 Is sure enough to make a mortal man 960
 Grow impious." So he inwardly began
 On things for which no wording can be found ;
 Deeper and deeper sinking, until drown'd
 Beyond the reach of music : for the choir
 Of Cynthia he heard not, though rough briar 965
 Nor muffling thicket interpos'd to dull
 The vesper hymn, far swollen, soft and full,
 Through the dark pillars of those sylvan aisles.
 He saw not the two maidens, nor their smiles,
 Wan as primroses gather'd at midnight 970
 By chilly finger'd spring. " Unhappy wight !
 Endymion ! " said Peona, " we are here !
 What wouldst thou ere we all are laid on bier ? "
 Then he embrac'd her, and his lady's hand
 Press'd, saying : " Sister, I would have command, 975
 If it were heaven's will, on our sad fate."
 At which that dark-eyed stranger stood elate
 And said, in a new voice, but sweet as love,
 To Endymion's amaze : " By Cupid's dove,

And so thou shalt ! and by the lily truth 980
 Of my own breast thou shalt, beloved youth !”
 And as she spake, into her face there came
 Light, as reflected from a silver flame :
 Her long black hair swell'd ampler, in display
 Full golden ; in her eyes a brighter day 985
 Dawn'd blue and full of love. Aye, he beheld
 Phœbe, his passion ! joyous she upheld
 Her lucid bow, continuing thus : “ Drear, drear
 Has our delaying been ; but foolish fear
 Withheld me first ; and then decrees of fate ; 990
 And then 't was fit that from this mortal state
 Thou shouldst, my love, by some unlook'd for change
 Be spiritualiz'd. Peona, we shall range
 These forests, and to thee they safe shall be
 As was thy cradle ; hither shalt thou flee 995
 To meet us many a time.” Next Cynthia bright
 Peona kiss'd, and bless'd with fair good night :
 Her brother kiss'd her too and knelt adown
 Before his goddess, in a blissful swoon.
 She gave her fair hands to him, and behold, 1000
 Before three swiftest kisses he had told,
 They vanish'd far away ! — Peona went
 Home through the gloomy wood in wonderment.

HYPERION.

A FRAGMENT.

BOOK I.

DEEP in the shady sadness of a vale
Far sunken from the healthy breath of morn,
Far from the fiery noon, and eve's one star,
Sat gray-hair'd Saturn, quiet as a stone,
Still as the silence round about his lair ; 5
Forest on forest hung about his head
Like cloud on cloud. No stir of air was there,
Not so much life as on a summer's day
Robs not one light seed from the feather'd grass,
But where the dead leaf fell, there did it rest. 10
A stream went voiceless by, still deadened more
By reason of his fallen divinity
Spreading a shade : the Naiad 'mid her reeds
Press'd her cold finger closer to her lips.

Along the margin-sand large foot-marks went, 15
No further than to where his feet had stray'd,
And slept there since. Upon the sodden ground
His old right hand lay nerveless, listless, dead,
Unscptred ; and his realmless eyes were closed ;
While his bow'd head seem'd list'ning to the Earth, 20
His ancient mother, for some comfort yet.

It seem'd no force could wake him from his place ;
But there came one, who with a kindred hand

Touch'd his wide shoulders, after bending low
 With reverence, though to one who knew it not. 25
 She was a Goddess of the infant world ;
 By her in stature the tall Amazon
 Had stood a pigmy's height : she would have ta'en
 Achilles by the hair and bent his neck ;
 Or with a finger stay'd Ixion's wheel. 30
 Her face was large as that of Memphian sphinx,
 Pedestal'd haply in a palace court,
 When sages look'd to Egypt for their lore.
 But oh ! how unlike marble was that face :
 How beautiful, if sorrow had not made 35
 Sorrow more beautiful than Beauty's self.
 There was a listening fear in her regard,
 As if calamity had but begun ;
 As if the vanward clouds of evil days
 Had spent their malice, and the sullen rear 40
 Was with its stored thunder labouring up.
 One hand she press'd upon that aching spot
 Where beats the human heart, as if just there,
 Though an immortal, she felt cruel pain :
 The other upon Saturn's bended neck 45
 She laid, and to the level of his ear
 Leaning with parted lips, some words she spake
 In solemn tenour and deep organ tone :
 Some mourning words, which in our feeble tongue
 Would come in these like accents ; O how frail 50
 To that large utterance of the early Gods !
 " Saturn, look up ! — though wherefore, poor old King ?
 I have no comfort for thee, no, not one :
 I cannot say, ' O wherefore sleepest thou ?'
 For heaven is parted from thee, and the earth 55
 Knows thee not, thus afflicted, for a God ;
 And ocean too, with all its solemn noise,

Has from thy sceptre pass'd ; and all the air
 Is emptied of thine hoary majesty.
 Thy thunder, conscious of the new command, 60
 Rumbles reluctant o'er our fallen house ;
 And thy sharp lightning in unpractised hands
 Scorches and burns our once serene domain.
 O aching time ! O moments big as years !
 All as ye pass swell out the monstrous truth, 65
 And press it so upon our weary griefs
 That unbelief has not a space to breathe.
 Saturn. sleep on : — O thoughtless, why did I
 Thus violate thy slumbrous solitude ?
 Why should I ope thy melancholy eyes ? 70
 Saturn, sleep on ! while at thy feet I weep."

As when, upon a tranced summer night,
 Those green-rob'd senators of mighty woods,
 Tall oaks, branch-charmed by the earnest stars,
 Dream, and so dream all night without a stir, 75
 Save from one gradual solitary gust
 Which comes upon the silence, and dies off,
 As if the ebbing air had but one wave ;
 So came these words and went ; the while in tears
 She touch'd her fair large forehead to the ground, 80
 Just where her falling hair might be outspread
 A soft and silken mat for Saturn's feet.
 One moon, with alteration slow, had shed
 Her silver seasons four upon the night,
 And still these two were postured motionless, 85
 Like natural sculpture in cathedral cavern ;
 The frozen God still couchant on the earth,
 And the sad Goddess weeping at his feet :
 Until at length old Saturn lifted up
 His faded eyes, and saw his kingdom gone, 90

And all the gloom and sorrow of the place,
 And that fair kneeling Goddess ; and then spake,
 As with a palsied tongue, and while his beard
 Shook horrid with such aspen-malady :
“O tender spouse of gold Hyperion, 95
Thea, I feel thee ere I see thy face ;
 Look up, and let me see our doom in it ;
 Look up, and tell me if this feeble shape
 Is Saturn's ; tell me, if thou hear'st the voice
 Of Saturn ; tell me, if this wrinkling brow, 100
 Naked and bare of its great diadem,
 Peers like the front of Saturn. Who had power
 To make me desolate ? whence came the strength ?
 How was it nurtur'd to such bursting forth,
 While Fate seem'd strangled in my nervous grasp ? 105
 But it is so ; and I am smother'd up,
 And buried from all godlike exercise
 Of influence benign on planets pale, .
 Of admonitions to the winds and seas,
 Of peaceful sway above man's harvesting, 110
 And all those acts which Deity supreme
 Doth ease its heart of love in. — I am gone
 Away from my own bosom : I have left
 My strong identity, my real self,
 Somewhere between the throne, and where I sit 115
 Here on this spot of earth. Search, Thea, search !
 Open thine eyes eterne, and sphere them round
 Upon all space : space starr'd, and lorn of light ;
 Space region'd with life-air ; and barren void ;
 Spaces of fire, and all the yawn of hell. — 120
 Search, Thea, search ! and tell me, if thou seest
 A certain shape or shadow, making way
 With wings or chariot fierce to repossess
 A heaven he lost erewhile : it must — it must

Be of ripe progress — Saturn must be King. 125
 Yes, there must be a golden victory ;
 There must be Gods thrown down, and trumpets blown
 Of triumph calm, and hymns of festival
 Upon the gold clouds metropolitan,
 Voices of soft proclaim, and silver stir 130
 Of strings in hollow shells ; and there shall be
 Beautiful things made new, for the surprise
 Of the sky-children ; I will give command :
 Thea ! Thea ! Thea ! where is Saturn ? ”

This passion lifted him upon his feet, 135
 And made his hands to struggle in the air,
 His Druid locks to shake and ooze with sweat,
 His eyes to fever out, his voice to cease.
 He stood, and heard not Thea's sobbing deep ;
 A little time, and then again he snatch'd 140
 Utterance thus. — “ But cannot I create ?
 Cannot I form ? Cannot I fashion forth
 Another world, another universe,
 To overbear and crumble this to naught ?
 Where is another chaos ? Where ? ” — That word 145
 Found way unto Olympus, and made quake
 The rebel three. — Thea was startled up,
 And in her bearing was a sort of hope,
 As thus she quick-voic'd spake, yet full of awe.

“ This cheers our fallen house : come to our friends, 150
 O Saturn ! come away, and give them heart ;
 I know the covert, for thence came I hither.”
 Thus brief ; then with beseeching eyes she went
 With backward footing through the shade a space :
 He follow'd, and she turn'd to lead the way 155
 Through aged boughs, that yielded like the mist
 Which eagles cleave upmounting from their nest.

Meanwhile in other realms big tears were shed,
 More sorrow like to this, and such like woe,
 Too huge for mortal tongue or pen of scribe : 160
 The Titans fierce, self-hid, or prison-bound,
 Groan'd for the old allegiance once more,
 And listen'd in sharp pain for Saturn's voice.
But one of the whole mammoth-brood still kept
His sov'reignty, and rule, and majesty ; — 165
Blazing Hyperion on his orb'd fire
 Still sat, still snuff'd the incense, teeming up
 From man to the sun's God ; yet unsecure :
 For as among us mortals omens drear
 Fright and perplex, so also shudder'd he — 170
 Not a dog's howl, or gloom-bird's hated screech,
 Or the familiar visiting of one
 Upon the first toll of his passing-bell,
 Or prophesyings of the midnight lamp ;
 But horrors, portion'd to a giant nerve, 175
 Oft made Hyperion ache. His palace bright
 Bastion'd with pyramids of glowing gold,
 And touch'd with shade of bronzed obelisks,
 Glar'd a blood-red through all its thousand courts,
 Arches, and domes, and fiery galleries ; 180
 And all its curtains of Aurorian clouds
 Flush'd angrily : while sometimes eagle's wings,
 Unseen before by Gods or wondering men,
 Darken'd the place ; and neighing steeds were heard,
 Not heard before by Gods or wondering men. 185
 Also, when he would taste the spicy wreaths
 Of incense, breath'd aloft from sacred hills,
 Instead of sweets, his ample palate took
 Savour of poisonous brass and metal sick :
 And so, when harbour'd in the sleepy west, 190
 After the full completion of fair day, —

For rest divine upon exalted couch
 And slumber in the arms of melody,
 He pac'd away the pleasant hours of ease
 With stride colossal, on from hall to hall ; 195
 While far within each aisle and deep recess,
 His winged minions in close clusters stood,
 Amaz'd and full of fear ; like anxious men
 Who on wide plains gather in panting troops,
 When earthquakes jar their battlements and towers. 200
 Even now, while Saturn, rous'd from icy trance,
 Went step for step with Thea through the woods,
 Hyperion, leaving twilight in the rear,
 Came slope upon the threshold of the west ;
 Then, as was wont, his palace-door flew ope 205
 In smoothest silence, save what solemn tubes,
 Blown by the serious Zephyrs, gave of sweet
 And wandering sounds, slow-breathed melodies ;
 And like a rose in vermeil tint and shape,
 In fragrance soft, and coolness to the eye, 210
 That inlet to severe magnificence
 Stood full blown, for the God to enter in.

He enter'd, but he enter'd full of wrath ;
 His flaming robes stream'd out beyond his heels,
 And gave a roar, as if of earthly fire, 215
 That scar'd away the meek ethereal Hours
 And made their dove-wings tremble. On he flar'd,
 From stately nave to nave, from vault to vault,
 Through bowers of fragrant and enwreathed light,
 And diamond-paved lustrous long arcades, 220
 Until he reach'd the great main cupola ;
 There standing fierce beneath, he stamped his foot,
 And from the basements deep to the high towers
 Jarr'd his own golden region ; and before

The quavering thunder thereupon had ceas'd, 225
 His voice leapt out, despite of godlike curb,
 To this result : " O dreams of day and night !
 O monstrous forms ! O effigies of pain !
 O spectres busy in a cold, cold gloom !
 O lank-ear'd Phantoms of black-weeded pools ! 230
 Why do I know ye ? why have I seen ye ? why
 Is my eternal essence thus distraught
 To see and to behold these horrors new ?
Saturn is fallen, am I too to fall ?
 Am I to leave this haven of my rest, 235
 This cradle of my glory, this soft clime,
 This calm luxuriance of blissful light,
 These crystalline pavilions, and pure fanes,
 Of all my lucent empire ? It is left
 Deserted, void, nor any haunt of mine. 240
 The blaze, the splendour, and the symmetry,
 I cannot see — but darkness, death and darkness.
 Even here, into my centre of repose,
 The shady visions come to domineer,
 Insult, and blind, and stifle up my pomp. — 245
 Fall ! — No, by Tellus and her briny robes !
 Over the fiery frontier of my realms
 I will advance a terrible right arm
 Shall scare that infant thunderer, rebel Jove,
 And bid old Saturn take his throne again." — 250
 He spake, and ceas'd, the while a heavier threat
 Held struggle with his throat but came not forth ;
 For as in theatres of crowded men
 Hubbub increases more they call out " Hush !"
 So at Hyperion's words the Phantoms pale 255
 Bestirr'd themselves, thrice horrible and cold ;
 And from the mirror'd level where he stood
 A mist arose, as from a scummy marsh.

At this, through all his bulk an agony
 Crept gradual, from the feet unto the crown, 260
 Like a lithe serpent vast and muscular
 Making slow way, with head and neck convuls'd
 From over-strained might. Releas'd, he fled
 To the eastern gates, and full six dewy hours
 Before the dawn in season due should blush, 265
 He breath'd fierce breath against the sleepy portals,
 Clear'd them of heavy vapours, burst them wide
 Suddenly on the ocean's chilly streams.
 The planet orb of fire, whereon he rode
 Each day from east to west the heavens through, 270
 Spun round in sable curtaining of clouds ;
 Nor therefore veiled quite, blindfold, and hid,
 But ever and anon the glancing spheres,
 Circles, and arcs, and broad-belted colure,
 Glow'd through, and wrought upon the muffling dark 275
 Sweet-shaped lightnings from the nadir deep
 Up to the zenith, — hieroglyphics old,
 Which sages and keen-eyed astrologers
 Then living on the earth, with labouring thought
 Won from the gaze of many centuries : 280
 Now lost, save what we find on remnants huge
 Of stone, or marble swart ; their import gone,
 Their wisdom long since fled. — Two wings this orb
 Possess'd for glory, two fair argent wings,
 Ever exalted at the God's approach : 285
 And now, from forth the gloom their plumes immense
 Rose, one by one, till all outspreaded were ;
 While still the dazzling globe maintain'd eclipse,
 Awaiting for Hyperion's command.
 Fain would he have commanded, fain took throne 290
 And bid the day begin, if but for change.
 He might not : — No, though a primeval God :

The sacred seasons might not be disturb'd.
 Therefore the operations of the dawn
 Stay'd in their birth, even as here 't is told. 295
 Those silver wings expanded sisterly,
 Eager to sail their orb ; the porches wide
 Open'd upon the dusk demesnes of night ;
 And the bright Titan, frenzied with new woes,
 Unus'd to bend, by hard compulsion bent 300
 His spirit to the sorrow of the time ;
 And all along a dismal rack of clouds,
 Upon the boundaries of day and night,
 He stretch'd himself in grief and radiance faint.
 There as he lay, the Heaven with its stars 305
 Look'd down on him with pity, and the voice
 Of Cœlus, from the universal space,
 Thus whisper'd low and solemn in his ear.
 " O brightest of my children dear, earth-born
 And sky-engendered, Son of Mysteries 310
 All unrevealed even to the powers
 Which met at thy creating ; at whose joys
 And palpitations sweet, and pleasures soft,
 I, Cœlus, wonder, how they came and whence ;
 And at the fruits thereof what shapes they be, 315
 Distinct, and visible ; symbols divine,
 Manifestations of that beauteous life
 Diffus'd unseen throughout eternal space :
 Of these new-form'd art thou, O brightest child !
 Of these, thy brethren and the Goddesses ! 320
 There is sad feud among ye, and rebellion
 Of son against his sire. I saw him fall,
 I saw my first-born tumbled from his throne !
 To me his arms were spread, to me his voice
 Found way from forth the thunders round his head ! 325
 Pale wox I, and in vapours hid my face.

Art thou, too, near such doom? vague fear there is :
 For I have seen my sons most unlike Gods.
 Divine ye were created, and divine
 In sad demeanour, solemn, undisturb'd, 330
 Unruffled, like high Gods, ye liv'd and ruled :
 Now I behold in you fear, hope, and wrath ;
 Actions of rage and passion ; even as
 I see them, on the mortal world beneath,
 In men who die. — This is the grief, O Son ! 335
 Sad sign of ruin, sudden dismay, and fall !
 Yet do thou strive ; as thou art capable,
 As thou canst move about, an evident God ;
 And canst oppose to each malignant hour
 Ethereal presence : — I am but a voice ; 340
 My life is but the life of winds and tides,
 No more than winds and tides can I avail : —
 But thou canst. — Be thou therefore in the van
 Of circumstance ; yea, seize the arrow's barb
 Before the tense string murmur. — To the earth ! 345
For there thou wilt find Saturn, and his woes.
 Meantime I will keep watch on thy bright sun,
 And of thy seasons be a careful nurse." —
 Ere half this region-whisper had come down,
 Hyperion arose, and on the stars 350
 Lifted his curved lids, and kept them wide
 Until it ceas'd ; and still he kept them wide :
 And still they were the same bright, patient stars.
 Then with a slow incline of his broad breast,
 Like to a diver in the pearly seas, 355
 Forward he stoop'd over the airy shore,
 And plung'd all noiseless into the deep night.

BOOK II.

JUST at the self-same beat of Time's wide wings
 Hyperion slid into the rustled air,
 And Saturn gain'd with Thea that sad place
 Where Cybele and the bruised Titans mourn'd.
 It was a den where no insulting light 5
 Could glimmer on their tears ; where their own groans
 They felt, but heard not, for the solid roar
 Of thunderous waterfalls and torrents hoarse,
 Pouring a constant bulk, uncertain where.
 Crag jutting forth to crag, and rocks that seem'd 10
 Ever as if just rising from a sleep,
 Forehead to forehead held their monstrous horns ;
 And thus in thousand hugest phantasies
 Made a fit roofing to this nest of woe.
 Instead of thrones, hard flint they sat upon, 15
 Couches of rugged stone, and slaty ridge
 Stubborn'd with iron. All were not assembled :
 Some chain'd in torture, and some wandering.
 Cœus, and Gyges, and Briareüs,
 Typhon, and Dolor, and Porphyriön, 20
 With many more, the brawniest in assault,
 Were pent in regions of laborious breath ;
 Dungeon'd in opaque element, to keep
 Their clenched teeth still clench'd, and all their limbs
 Lock'd up like veins of metal, cramp'd and screw'd ; 25
 Without a motion, save of their big hearts
 Heaving in pain, and horribly convuls'd
 With sanguine feverous boiling gurge of pulse.
 Mnemosyne was straying in the world ;
 Far from her moon had Phœbe wandered ; 30

And many else were free to roam abroad,
 But for the main, here found they covert drear.
 Scarce images of life, one here, one there,
 Lay vast and edgeways ; like a dismal cirque
 Of Druid stones, upon a forlorn moor, 35
 When the chill rain begins at shut of eve,
 In dull November, and their chancel vault,
 The Heaven itself, is blinded throughout night.
 Each one kept shroud, nor to his neighbour gave
 Or word, or look, or action of despair. 40
 Creüs was one ; his ponderous iron mace
 Lay by him, and a shatter'd rib of rock
 Told of his rage, ere he thus sank and pined.
 Iäpetus another ; in his grasp.
 A serpent's plashy neck ; its barbed tongue 45
 Squeez'd from the gorge, and all its uncurl'd length
 Dead ; and because the creature could not spit
 Its poison in the eyes of conquering Jove.
 Next Cottus : prone he lay, chin uppermost,
 As though in pain ; for still upon the flint 50
 He ground severe his skull, with open mouth
 And eyes at horrid working. Nearest him
 Asia, born of most enormous Caf,
 Who cost her mother Tellus keener pangs,
 Though feminine, than any of her sons : 55
 More thought than woe was in her dusky face,
 For she was prophesying of her glory ;
 And in her wide imagination stood
 Palm-shaded temples, and high rival fanes,
 By Oxus or in Ganges' sacred isles. 60
 Even as Hope upon her anchor leans,
 So leant she, not so fair, upon a tusk
 Shed from the broadest of her elephants.
 Above her, on a crag's uneasy shelve,

Upon his elbow rais'd, all prostrate else, 65
 Shadow'd Enceladus ; once tame and mild
 As grazing ox unworried in the meads ;
 Now tiger-passion'd, lion-thoughted, wroth,
 He meditated, plotted, and even now
 Was hurling mountains in that second war, 70
 Not long delay'd, that scar'd the younger Gods
 To hide themselves in forms of beast and bird.
 Nor far hence Atlas ; and beside him prone
 Phorcus, the sire of Gorgons. Neighbour'd close
 Oceanus, and Tethys, in whose lap 75
 Sobb'd Clymene among her tangled hair.
 In midst of all lay Themis, at the feet
 Of Ops the queen all clouded round from sight ;
 No shape distinguishable, more than when
 Thick night confounds the pine-tops with the clouds : 80
 And many else whose names may not be told.
 For when the Muse's wings are air-ward spread,
 Who shall delay her flight ? And she must chant
 Of Saturn, and his guide, who now had climb'd
 With damp and slippery footing from a depth 85
 More horrid still. Above a sombre cliff
 Their heads appear'd, and up their stature grew
 Till on the level height their steps found ease :
 Then Thea spread abroad her trembling arms
 Upon the precincts of this nest of pain, 90
 And sidelong fix'd her eye on Saturn's face :
 There saw she direst strife ; the supreme God
 At war with all the frailty of grief,
 Of rage, of fear, anxiety, revenge,
 Remorse, spleen, hope, but most of all despair. 95
 Against these plagues he strove in vain ; for Fate
 Had pour'd a mortal oil upon his head,
 A disanointing poison : so that Thea,

Affrighted, kept her still, and let him pass
 First onwards in, among the fallen tribe. 100

As with us mortal men, the laden heart
 Is persecuted more, and fever'd more.
 When it is nighing to the mournful house
 Where other hearts are sick of the same bruise ;
 So Saturn, as he walk'd into the midst, 105
 Felt faint, and would have sunk among the rest,
 But that he met Enceladus's eye,
 Whose mightiness, and awe of him, at once
 Came like an inspiration ; and he shouted.
 "Titans, behold your God!" at which some groan'd ; 110
 Some started on their feet ; some also shouted ;
 Some wept, some wail'd, all bow'd with reverence ;
 And Ops, uplifting her black folded veil.
 Show'd her pale cheeks, and all her forehead wan,
 Her eyebrows thin and jet, and hollow eyes. 115
 There is a roaring in the bleak-grown pines
 When Winter lifts his voice ; there is a noise
 Among immortals when a God gives sign,
 With hushing finger, how he means to load
 His tongue with the full weight of utterless thought, 120
 With thunder, and with music, and with pomp :
 Such noise is like the roar of bleak-grown pines ;
 Which, when it ceases in this mountain'd world,
 No other sound succeeds ; but ceasing here.
 Among these fallen, Saturn's voice therefrom 125
 Grew up like organ, that begins anew
 Its strain, when other harmonies, stopt short,
 Leave the dinn'd air vibrating silverly.
 Thus grew it up — "Not in my own sad breast,
 Which is its own great judge and searcher out, 130
 Can I find reason why ye should be thus :
 Not in the legends of the first of days,

Studied from that old spirit-leaved book
 Which starry Uranus with finger bright
 Sav'd from the shores of darkness, when the waves 135
 Low-ebb'd still hid it up in shallow gloom ; —
 And the which book ye know I ever kept
 For my firm-based footstool : — Ah, infirm !
 Not there, nor in sign, symbol, or portent
 Of element, earth, water, air, and fire, — 140
 At war, at peace, or inter-quarreling
 One against one, or two, or three, or all
 Each several one against the other three,
 As fire with air loud warring when rain-floods
 Drown both, and press them both against earth's face, 145
 Where, finding sulphur, a quadruple wrath
 Unhinges the poor world ; — not in that strife,
 Wherefrom I take strange lore, and read it deep,
 Can I find reason why ye should be thus :
 No, no-where can unriddle, though I search, 150
 And pore on Nature's universal scroll
 Even to swooning, why ye, Divinities,
 The first-born of all shap'd and palpable Gods,
 Should cower beneath what, in comparison,
 Is untremendous might. Yet ye are here, 155
 O'erwhelm'd, and spurn'd, and batter'd, ye are here !
 O Titans, shall I say 'Arise !' — Ye groan :
 Shall I say 'Crouch !' — Ye groan. What can I then ?
 O Heaven wide ! O unseen parent dear ?
 What can I ? Tell me, all ye brethren Gods, 160
 How we can war, how engine our great wrath !
 O speak your counsel now, for Saturn's ear
 Is all a-hunger'd. Thou, Oceanus,
 Ponderest high and deep ; and in thy face
 I see, astonied, that severe content 165
 Which comes of thought and musing : give us help ! ”

So ended Saturn ; and the God of the Sea,
 Sophist and sage, from no Athenian grove,
 But cogitation in his watery shades,
 Arose, with locks not oozy, and began, 170
 In murmurs, which his first-endeavouring tongue
 Caught infant-like from the far-foamed sands.
 " O ye, whom wrath consumes ! who, passion-stung,
 Writhe at defeat, and nurse your agonies !
 Shut up your senses, stifle up your ears, 175
 My voice is not a bellows unto ire.
 Yet listen, ye who will, whilst I bring proof
 How ye, perforce, must be content to stoop :
 And in the proof much comfort will I give,
 If ye will take that comfort in its truth. 180
 We fall by course of Nature's law, not force
 Of thunder, or of Jove. Great Saturn, thou
 Hast sifted well the atom-universe ;
 But for this reason, that thou art the King,
 And only blind from sheer supremacy, 185
 One avenue was shaded from thine eyes,
 Through which I wandered to eternal truth.
 And first, as thou wast not the first of powers,
 So art thou not the last ; it cannot be :
 Thou art not the beginning nor the end. 190
 From chaos and parental darkness came
 Light, the first fruit of that intestine broil,
 That sullen ferment, which for wondrous ends
 Was ripening in itself. That ripe hour came,
 And with it light, and light, engendering 195
 Upon its own producer, forthwith touch'd
 The whole enormous matter into life.
 Upon that very hour, our parentage,
 The Heavens and the Earth, were manifest :
 Then thou first-born and we the giant-race 200

Found ourselves ruling new and beauteous realms.
 Now comes the pain of truth, to whom 't is pain ;
 O folly ! for to bear all naked truths,
 And to envisage circumstance, all calm,
 That is the top of sovereignty. Mark well ! 205
 As Heaven and Earth are fairer, fairer far
 Than Chaos and blank Darkness, though once chiefs ;
 And as we show beyond that Heaven and Earth
 In form and shape compact and beautiful,
 In will, in action free, companionship, 210
 And thousand other signs of purer life ;
 So on our heels a fresh perfection treads,
 A power more strong in beauty, born of us
 And fated to excel us, as we pass
 In glory that old Darkness : nor are we 215
 Thereby more conquer'd, than by us the rule
 Of shapeless Chaos. Say, doth the dull soil
 Quarrel with the proud forests it hath fed,
 And feedeth still, more comely than itself ?
 Can it deny the chiefdom of green groves ? 220
 Or shall the tree be envious of the dove
 Because it cooeth, and hath snowy wings
 To wander wherewithal and find its joys ?
 We are such forest-trees, and our fair boughs
 Have bred forth, not pale solitary doves, 225
 But eagles golden-feather'd, who do tower
 Above us in their beauty, and must reign
 In right thereof ; for 't is the eternal law
 That first in beauty should be first in might :
 Yea, by that law, another race may drive 230
 Our conquerors to mourn as we do now.
 Have ye beheld the young God of the Seas,
 My dispossessor ? Have ye seen his face ?
 Have ye beheld his chariot, foam'd along

By noble winged creatures he hath made ? 235
 I saw him on the calmed waters scud,
 With such a glow of beauty in his eyes,
 That it enforc'd me to bid sad farewell
 To all my empire : farewell sad I took,
 And hither came, to see how dolorous fate 240
 Had wrought upon ye ; and how I might best
 Give consolation in this woe extreme.
 Receive the truth, and let it be your balm."

Whether through posed conviction, or disdain,
 They guarded silence, when Oceanus 245
 Left murmuring, what deepest thought can tell ?
 But so it was, none answer'd for a space,
 Save one whom none regarded, Clymene ;
 And yet she answer'd not, only complain'd,
 With hectic lips, and eyes up-looking mild, 250
 Thus wording timidly among the fierce :
 "O Father, I am here the simplest voice,
 And all my knowledge is that joy is gone.
 And this thing woe crept in among our hearts,
 There to remain for ever, as I fear : 255
 I would not bode of evil, if I thought
 So weak a creature could turn off the help
 Which by just right should come of mighty Gods ;
 Yet let me tell my sorrow, let me tell
 Of what I heard, and how it made me weep, 260
 And know that we had parted from all hope.
 I stood upon a shore, a pleasant shore,
 Where a sweet clime was breathed from a land
 Of fragrance, quietness, and trees, and flowers.
 Full of calm joy it was, as I of grief : 265
 Too full of joy and soft delicious warmth ;
 So that I felt a movement in my heart

To chide, and to reproach that solitude
 With songs of misery, music of our woes ;
 And sat me down, and took a mouthed shell 270
 And murmur'd into it, and made melody —
 O melody no more ! for while I sang,
 And with poor skill let pass into the breeze
 The dull shell's echo, from a bowery strand
 Just opposite, an island of the sea, 275
 There came enchantment with the shifting wind,
 That did both drown and keep alive my ears.
 I threw my shell away upon the sand,
 And a wave fill'd it, as my sense was fill'd
 With that new blissful golden melody. 280
 A living death was in each gush of sounds,
 Each family of rapturous hurried notes,
 That fell, one after one, yet all at once,
 Like pearl beads dropping sudden from their string :
 And then another, then another strain, 285
 Each like a dove leaving its olive perch,
 With music-wing'd instead of silent plumes,
 To hover round my head, and make me sick
 Of joy and grief at once. Grief overcame,
 And I was stopping up my frantic ears, 290
 When, past all hindrance of my trembling hands,
 A voice came sweeter, sweeter than all tune,
 And still it cried, ' Apollo ! young Apollo !
 The morning-bright Apollo ! young Apollo !'
 I fled, it follow'd me, and cried ' Apollo !' 295
 O Father, and O Brethren, had ye felt
 Those pains of mine ; O Saturn, hadst thou felt,
 Ye would not call this too indulged tongue
 Presumptuous, in thus venturing to be heard."

So far her voice flow'd on, like timorous brook 300
 That lingering along a pebbled coast,

Doth fear to meet the sea: but sea it met,
 And shudder'd; for the overwhelming voice
 Of huge Enceladus swallow'd it in wrath:
 The ponderous syllables, like sullen waves 305
 In the half-glutt'd hollows of reef-rocks,
 Came booming thus, while still upon his arm
 He lean'd; not rising, from supreme contempt.
 "Or shall we listen to the over-wise,
 Or to the over-foolish giant, Gods? 310
 Not thunderbolt on thunderbolt, till all
 That rebel Jove's whole armoury were spent,
 Not world on world upon these shoulders piled,
 Could agonize me more than baby-words
 In midst of this dethronement horrible. 315
 Speak! roar! shout! yell! ye sleepy Titans all.
 Do ye forget the blows, the buffets vile?
 Are ye not smitten by a youngling arm?
 Dost thou forget, sham Monarch of the Waves,
 Thy scalding in the seas? What, have I rous'd 320
 Your spleens with so few simple words as these?
 O joy! for now I see ye are not lost:
 O joy! for now I see a thousand eyes
 Wide glaring for revenge!" — As this he said,
 He lifted up his stature vast, and stood, 325
 Still without intermission speaking thus:
 "Now ye are flames, I'll tell you how to burn,
 And purge the ether of our enemies;
 How to feed fierce the crooked stings of fire,
 And singe away the swollen clouds of Jove, 330
 Stiffing that puny essence in its tent.
 O let him feel the evil he hath done;
 For though I scorn Oceanus's lore,
 Much pain have I for more than loss of realms:
 The days of peace and slumberous calm are fled; 335

Those days, all innocent of scathing war,
 When all the fair Existences of heaven
 Came open-eyed to guess what we would speak : —
 That was before our brows were taught to frown,
 Before our lips knew else but solemn sounds ; 340
 That was before we knew the winged thing,
 Victory, might be lost, or might be won.
 And be ye mindful that Hyperion,
 Our brightest brother, still is undisgraced —
 Hyperion, lo ! his radiance is here !” 345

All eyes were on Enceladus's face,
 And they beheld, while still Hyperion's name
 Flew from his lips up to the vaulted rocks,
 A pallid gleam across his features stern :
 Not savage, for he saw full many a God 350
 Wroth as himself. He look'd upon them all,
 And in each face he saw a gleam of light,
 But splendor in Saturn's, whose hoar locks
 Shone like the bubbling foam about a keel
 When the prow sweeps into a midnight cove. 355
 In pale and silver silence they remain'd,
 Till suddenly a splendour, like the morn,
 Pervaded all the beetling gloomy steeps,
 All the sad spaces of oblivion,
 And every gulf, and every chasm old, 360
 And every height, and every sullen depth,
 Voiceless, or hoarse with loud tormented streams :
 And all the everlasting cataracts,
 And all the headlong torrents far and near,
 Mantled before in darkness and huge shade, 365
 Now saw the light and made it terrible.
 It was Hyperion : — a granite peak
 His bright feet touch'd, and there he stay'd to view

The misery his brilliance had betray'd
 To the most hateful seeing of itself. 370
 Golden his hair of short Numidian curl,
 Regal his shape majestic, a vast shade
 In midst of his own brightness, like the bulk
 Of Memnon's image at the set of sun
 To one who travels from the dusking East : 375
 Sighs, too, as mournful as that Memnon's harp
 He utter'd, while his hands contemplative
 He press'd together, and in silence stood.
 Despondence seiz'd again the fallen Gods
 At sight of the dejected King of Day, 380
 And many hid their faces from the light :
 But fierce Enceladus sent forth his eyes
 Among the brotherhood ; and, at their glare,
 Uprose Iäpetus, and Creüs too,
 And Phorcus, sea-born, and together strode 385
 To where he towered on his eminence.
 There those four shouted forth old Saturn's name ;
 Hyperion from the peak loud answered, " Saturn !"
 Saturn sat near the Mother of the Gods,
 In whose face was no joy, though all the Gods 390
 Gave from their hollow throats the name of " Saturn !"

BOOK III.

THUS in alternate uproar and sad peace,
 Amazed were those Titans utterly.
 O leave them, Muse! O leave them to their woes;
 For thou art weak to sing such tumults dire :
 A solitary sorrow best befits 5
 Thy lips, and antheming a lonely grief.
 Leave them, O Muse! for thou anon wilt find
 Many a fallen old Divinity
 Wandering in vain about bewildered shores.
 Meantime touch piously the Delphic harp, 10
 And not a wind of heaven but will breathe
 In aid soft warble from the Dorian flute;
 For lo! 't is for the Father of all verse.
 Flush every thing that hath a vermeil hue,
 Let the rose glow intense and warm the air, 15
 And let the clouds of even and of morn
 Float in voluptuous fleeces o'er the hills;
 Let the red wine within the goblet boil,
 Cold as a bubbling well; let faint-lipped shells,
 On sands, or in great deeps, vermilion turn 20
 Through all their labyrinths; and let the maid
 Blush keenly, as with some warm kiss surpris'd.
 Chief isle of the embowered Cyclades,
 Rejoice, O Delos, with thine olives green,
 And poplars, and lawn-shading palms, and beech, 25
 In which the Zephyr breathes the loudest song,
 And hazels thick, dark-stemm'd beneath the shade:
 Apollo is once more the golden theme!
 Where was he, when the Giant of the Sun
 Stood bright, amid the sorrow of his peers? 30

Together had he left his mother fair
 And his twin-sister sleeping in their bower,
 And in the morning twilight wander'd forth
 Beside the osiers of a rivulet,
 Full ankle-deep in lilies of the vale. 35
 The nightingale had ceas'd, and a few stars
 Were lingering in the heavens, while the thrush
 Began calm-throated. Throughout all the isle
 There was no covert, no retired cave
 Unhaunted by the murmurous noise of waves, 40
 Though scarcely heard in many a green recess.
 He listen'd, and he wept, and his bright tears
 Went trickling down the golden bow he held.
 Thus with half-shut suffused eyes he stood,
 While from beneath some cumbrous boughs hard by 45
 With solemn step an awful Goddess came,
 And there was purport in her looks for him,
 Which he with eager guess began to read
 Perplex'd, the while melodiously he said :
 "~~How cam'st thou over the unfooted sea?~~ 50
 Or hath that antique mien and robed form
 Mov'd in these vales invisible till now?
 Sure I have heard those vestments sweeping o'er
 The fallen leaves, when I have sat alone
 In cool mid-forest. Surely I have trac'd 55
 The rustle of those ample skirts about
 These grassy solitudes, and seen the flowers
 Lift up their heads, as still the whisper pass'd.
 Goddess! I have beheld those eyes before,
 And their eternal calm, and all that face, 60
 Or I have dream'd."—"Yes," said the supreme shape,
 "Thou hast dream'd of me; and awaking up
 Didst find a lyre all golden by thy side,
 Whose strings touch'd by thy fingers, all the vast

Unweari'd ear of the whole universe 65
 Listen'd in pain and pleasure at the birth
 Of such new tuneful wonder. Is 't not strange
 That thou shouldst weep, so gifted? Tell me, youth,
 What sorrow thou canst feel; for I am sad
 When thou dost shed a tear: explain thy griefs 70
 To one who in this lonely isle hath been
 The watcher of thy sleep and hours of life,
 From the young day when first thy infant hand
 Pluck'd witless the weak flowers, till thine arm
 Could bend that bow heroic to all times. 75
 Show thy heart's secret to an ancient Power
 Who hath forsaken old and sacred thrones
 For prophecies of thee, and for the sake
 Of loveliness new born." — Apollo then,
 With sudden scrutiny and gloomless eyes, 80
 Thus answer'd, while his white melodious throat
 Throbb'd with the syllables. — " Mnemosyne!
 Thy name is on my tongue, I know not how;
 Why should I tell thee what thou so well seest?
 Why should I strive to show what from thy lips 85
 Would come no mystery? For me, dark, dark,
 And painful vile oblivion seals my eyes:
 I strive to search wherefore I am so sad,
 Until a melancholy numbs my limbs;
 And then upon the grass I sit, and moan, 90
 Like one who once had wings. — O why should I
 Feel curs'd and thwarted, when the liegeless air
 Yields to my step aspirant? why should I
 Spurn the green turf as hateful to my feet?
 Goddess benign, point forth some unknown thing: 95
 Are there not other regions than this isle?
 What are the stars? There is the sun, the sun!
 And the most patient brilliance of the moon!

And stars by thousands! Point me out the way
 To any one particular beauteous star, 100
 And I will flit into it with my lyre,
 And make its silvery splendour pant with bliss.
 I have heard the cloudy thunder : Where is power?
 Whose hand, whose essence, what divinity
 Makes this alarum in the elements, 105
 While I here idle listen on the shores
 In fearless yet in aching ignorance?
 O tell me, lonely Goddess, by thy harp,
 That waileth every morn and eventide,
 Tell me why thus I rave, about these groves! 110
 Mute thou remainest — Mute! yet I can read
 A wondrous lesson in thy silent face :
 Knowledge enormous makes a God of me.
 Names, deeds, gray legends, dire events, rebellions,
 Majesties, sovran voices, agonies, 115
 Creations and destroyings, all at once
 Pour into the wide hollows of my brain,
 And deify me, as if some blithe wine
 Or bright elixir peerless I had drunk,
 And so become immortal.” — Thus the God, 120
 While his enkindled eyes, with level glance
 Beneath his white soft temples, steadfast kept
 Trembling with light upon Mnemosyne.
 Soon wild commotions shook him, and made flush
 All the immortal fairness of his limbs ; 125
 Most like the struggle at the gate of death ;
 Or liker still to one who should take leave
 Of pale immortal death, and with a pang
 As hot as death’s is chill, with fierce convulse
 Die into life : so young Apollo anguish’d ; 130
 His very hair, his golden tresses famed
 Kept undulation round his eager neck.

During the pain Mnemosyne upheld
 Her arms as one who prophesied. — At length
 Apollo shriek'd; — and lo! from all his limbs
 Celestial

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L A M I A .

PART I.

UPON a time, before the fairy broods
Drove Nymph and Satyr from the prosperous woods,
Before King Oberon's bright diadem,
Sceptre, and mantle, clasp'd with dewy gem,
Frighted away the Dryads and the Fauns 5
From rushes green, and brakes, and cowlslipped lawns,
The ever-smitten Hermes empty left
His golden throne, bent warm on amorous theft:
From high Olympus had he stolen light,
On this side of Jove's clouds, to escape the sight 10
Of his great summoner, and made retreat
Into a forest on the shores of Crete.
For somewhere in that sacred island dwelt
A nymph, to whom all hoofed Satyrs knelt;
At whose white feet the languid Tritons pour'd 15
Pearls, while on land they wither'd and ador'd.
Fast by the springs where she to bathe was wont,
And in those meads where sometime she might haunt,
Were strewn rich gifts, unknown to any Muse,
Though Fancy's casket were unlock'd to choose. 20
Ah, what a world of love was at her feet!
So Hermes thought, and a celestial heat
Burnt from his winged heels to either ear,
That from a whiteness, as the lily clear,
Blush'd into roses 'mid his golden hair, 25

Fallen in jealous curls about his shoulders bare.
 From vale to vale, from wood to wood, he flew,
 Breathing upon the flowers his passion new,
 And wound with many a river to its head,
 To find where this sweet nymph prepar'd her secret bed: 30
 In vain; the sweet nymph might nowhere be found,
 And so he rested, on the lonely ground,
 Pensive, and full of painful jealousies
 Of the Wood-Gods, and even the very trees.
 There as he stood, he heard a mournful voice, 35
 Such as once heard, in gentle heart, destroys
 All pain but pity: thus the lone voice spake:
 "When from this wreathed tomb shall I awake!
 When move in a sweet body fit for life,
 And love, and pleasure, and the ruddy strife 40
 Of hearts and lips! Ah, miserable me!"
 The God, dove-footed, glided silently
 Round bush and tree, soft-brushing, in his speed,
 The taller grasses and full-flowering weed,
 Until he found a palpitating snake, 45
 Bright, and cirque-couchant in a dusky brake.

She was a gordian shape of dazzling hue,
 Vermilion-spotted, golden, green, and blue;
 Striped like a zebra, freckled like a pard,
 Eyed like a peacock, and all crimson barred; 50
 And full of silver moons, that, as she breath'd,
 Dissolv'd, or brighter shone, or interwreath'd
 Their lustres with the gloomier tapestries —
 So rainbow-sided, touch'd with miseries,
 She seem'd, at once, some penanced lady elf, 55
 Some demon's mistress, or the demon's self.
 Upon her crest she wore a wannish fire
 Sprinkled with stars, like Ariadne's tiar:

Her head was serpent, but ah, bitter-sweet !
 She had a woman's mouth with all its pearls complete : 60
 And for her eyes : what could such eyes do there
 But weep, and weep, that they were born so fair,
 As Proserpine still weeps for her Sicilian air ?
 Her throat was serpent, but the words she spake
 Came, as through bubbling honey, for Love's sake, 65
 And thus ; while Hermes on his pinions lay,
 Like a stooped falcon ere he takes his prey.

“ Fair Hermes, crown'd with feathers, fluttering light,
 I had a splendid dream of thee last night :
 I saw thee sitting on a throne of gold, 70
 Among the Gods, upon Olympus old,
 The only sad one ; for thou didst not hear
 The soft, lute-fingered Muses chanting clear,
 Nor even Apollo when he sang alone,
 Deaf to his throbbing throat's long, long melodious moan. 75
 I dreamt I saw thee, rob'd in purple flakes,
 Break amorous through the clouds, as morning breaks,
 And, swiftly as a bright Phœbean dart,
 Strike for the Cretan isle ; and here thou art !
 Too gentle Hermes, hast thou found the maid ? ” 80
 Whereat the star of Lethe not delay'd
 His rosy eloquence, and thus inquir'd :
 “ Thou smooth-lipped serpent, surely high inspired !
 Thou beauteous wreath, with melancholy eyes,
 Possess whatever bliss thou canst devise, 85
 Telling me only where my nymph is fled, —
 Where she doth breathe ! ” “ Bright planet, thou hast said, ”
 Return'd the snake, “ but seal with oaths, fair God ! ”
 “ I swear, ” said Hermes, “ by my serpent rod,
 And by thine eyes, and by thy starry crown ! ” 90
 Light flew his earnest words, among the blossoms blown.

Then thus again the brilliance feminine:
 "Too frail of heart! for this lost nymph of thine,
 Free as the air, invisibly, she strays
 About these thornless wilds; her pleasant days 95
 She tastes unseen; unseen her nimble feet
 Leave traces in the grass and flowers sweet;
 From weary tendrils, and bowed branches green,
 She plucks the fruit unseen, she bathes unseen:
 And by my power is her beauty veil'd 100
 To keep it unaffronted, unassailed
 By the love-glances of unlovely eyes,
 Of Satyrs, Fauns, and bleared Silenus' sighs.
 Pale grew her immortality, for woe
 Of all these lovers, and she grieved so 105
 I took compassion on her, bade her steep
 Her hair in weird syrups, that would keep
 Her loveliness invisible, yet free
 To wander as she loves, in liberty.
 Thou shalt behold her, Hermes, thou alone, 110
 If thou wilt, as thou swearest, grant my boon!"
 Then, once again, the charmed God began
 An oath, and through the serpent's ears it ran
 Warm, tremulous, devout, psalterian.
 Ravished, she lifted her Circean head, 115
 Blush'd a live damask, and swift-lisping said,
 "I was a woman, let me have once more
 A woman's shape, and charming as before.
 I love a youth of Corinth — O the bliss!
 Give me my woman's form, and place me where he is. 120
 Stoop, Hermes, let me breathe upon thy brow,
 And thou shalt see thy sweet nymph even now."
 The God on half-shut feathers sank serene,
 She breath'd upon his eyes, and swift was seen
 Of both the guarded nymph near-smiling on the green. 125

It was no dream; or say a dream it was,
 Real are the dreams of Gods, and smoothly pass
 Their pleasures in a long immortal dream.
 One warm, flushed moment, hovering, it might seem
 Dash'd by the wood-nymph's beauty, so he burn'd : 130
 Then, lighting on the printless verdure, turn'd
 To the swooned serpent, and with languid arm,
 Delicate, put to proof the lithe Caducean charm.
 So done, upon the nymph his eyes he bent,
 Full of adoring tears and blandishment, 135
 And towards her stept: she, like a moon in wane,
 Faded before him, cower'd, nor could restrain
 Her fearful sobs, self-folding like a flower
 That faints into itself at evening hour :
 But the God fostering her chilled hand, 140
 She felt the warmth, her eyelids open'd bland,
 And, like new flowers at morning song of bees,
 Bloom'd, and gave up her honey to the lees.
 Into the green-recessed woods they flew ;
 Nor grew they pale, as mortal lovers do. 145

Left to herself, the serpent now began
 To change; her elfin blood in madness ran,
 Her mouth foam'd, and the grass, therewith besprent.
 Wither'd at dew so sweet and virulent ;
 Her eyes in torture fixed, and anguish drear, 150
 Hot, glazed, and wide, with lid-lashes all sear,
 Flash'd phosphor and sharp sparks, without one cooling
 tear.

The colours all inflamed throughout her train,
 She writh'd about, convuls'd with scarlet pain:
 A deep volcanian yellow took the place 155
 Of all her milder-mooned body's grace ;
 And, as the lava ravishes the mead,

Spoilt all her silver mail, and golden brede ;
 Made gloom of all her frecklings, streaks and bars,
 Eclips'd her crescents, and lick'd up her stars : 160
 So that, in moments few, she was undrest
 Of all her sapphires, greens, and amethyst,
 And rubious argent : of all these bereft,
 Nothing but pain and ugliness were left.
 Still shone her crown ; that vanish'd, also she 165
 Melted and disappear'd as suddenly ;
 And in the air, her new voice luting soft,
 Cried, " Lycius ! gentle Lycius ! " — Borne aloft
 With the bright mists about the mountains hoar
 These words dissolv'd : Crete's forests heard no more. 170

Whither fled Lamia, now a lady bright,
 A full-born beauty new and exquisite ?
 She fled into that valley they pass o'er
 Who go to Corinth from Cenchreas' shore ;
 And rested at the foot of those wild hills, 175
 The rugged founts of the Peræan rills,
 And of that other ridge whose barren back
 Stretches, with all its mist and cloudy rack,
 South-westward to Cleone. There she stood
 About a young bird's flutter from a wood, 180
 Fair, on a sloping green of mossy tread,
 By a clear pool, wherein she passioned
 To see herself escap'd from so sore ills,
 While her robes flaunted with the daffodils.

Ah, happy Lycius ! — for she was a maid 185
 More beautiful than ever twisted braid,
 Or sigh'd, or blush'd, or on spring-flowered lea
 Spread a green kirtle to the minstrelsy :
 A virgin purest lipped, yet in the lore

Of love deep learned to the red heart's core : 190
 Not one hour old, yet of sciential brain
 To unperplex bliss from its neighbour pain ;
 Define their pettish limits, and estrange
 Their points of contact, and swift counterchange ;
 Intrigue with the specious chaos, and dispart 195
 Its most ambiguous atoms with sure art ;
 As though in Cupid's college she had spent
 Sweet days a lovely graduate, still unshent,
 And kept his rosy terms in idle languishment.

Why this fair creature chose so fairly 200
 By the wayside to linger, we shall see ;
 But first 't is fit to tell how she could muse
 And dream, when in the serpent prison-house,
 Of all she list, strange or magnificent :
 How, ever, where she will'd, her spirit went ; 205
 Whether to faint Elysium, or where
 Down through tress-lifting waves the Nereids fair
 Wind into Thetis' bower by many a pearly stair ;
 Or where God Bacchus drains his cups divine,
 Stretch'd out, at ease, beneath a glutinous pine ; 210
 Or where in Pluto's gardens palatine
 Mulciber's columns gleam in far piazzian line.
 And sometimes into cities she would send
 Her dream, with feast and rioting to blend :
 And once, while among mortals dreaming thus, 215
 She saw the young Corinthian Lycius
 Charioting foremost in the envious race,
 Like a young Jove with calm uneager face,
 And fell into a swooning love of him.
 Now on the moth-time of that evening dim 220
 He would return that way, as well she knew,
 To Corinth from the shore ; for freshly blew

The eastern soft wind, and his galley now
 Grated the quaystones with her brazen prow
 In port Cenchreas, from Egina isle 225
 Fresh anchor'd ; whither he had been awhile
 To sacrifice to Jove, whose temple there
 Waits with high marble doors for blood and incense rare.
 Jove heard his vows, and better'd his desire ;
 For by some freakful chance he made retire 230
 From his companions, and set forth to walk,
 Perhaps grown wearied of their Corinth talk :
 Over the solitary hills he fared,
 Thoughtless at first, but ere eve's star appear'd
 His phantasy was lost, where reason fades, 235
 In the calmed twilight of Platonic shades.
 Lamia beheld him coming, near, more near —
 Close to her passing, in indifference drear,
 His silent sandals swept the mossy green ;
 So neighboured to him, and yet so unseen 240
 She stood : he pass'd, shut up in mysteries,
 His mind wrapp'd like his mantle, while her eyes
 Follow'd his steps, and her neck regal white
 Turn'd — syllabing thus, " Ah, Lycius bright,
 And will you leave me on the hills alone ? 245
 Lycius, look back ! and be some pity shown."
 He did ; not with cold wonder fearingly,
 But Orpheus-like at an Eurydice ;
 For so delicious were the words she sung,
 It seem'd he had lov'd them a whole summer long : 250
 And soon his eyes had drunk her beauty up,
 Leaving no drop in the bewildering cup,
 And still the cup was full. — while he, afraid
 Lest she should vanish ere his lip had paid
 Due adoration, thus began to adore ; 255
 Her soft look growing coy, she saw his chain so sure :

"Leave thee alone ! Look back ! Ah, Goddess, see
 Whether my eyes can ever turn from thee !
 For pity do not this sad heart belie —
 Even as thou vanishest so I shall die. 260
 Stay ! though a Naiad of the rivers, stay !
 To thy far wishes will thy streams obey :
 Stay ! though the greenest woods be thy domain,
 Alone they can drink up the morning rain :
 Though a descended Pleiad, will not one 265
 Of thine harmonious sisters keep in tune
 Thy spheres, and as thy silver proxy shine ?
 So sweetly to these ravished ears of mine
 Came thy sweet greeting, that if thou shouldst fade,
 Thy memory will waste me to a shade : — 270
 For pity do not melt ! " — " If I should stay,"
 Said Lamia, " here, upon this floor of clay,
 And pain my steps upon these flowers too rough,
 What canst thou say or do of charm enough
 To dull the nice remembrance of my home ? 275
 Thou canst not ask me with thee here to roam
 Over these hills and vales, where no joy is, —
 Empty of immortality and bliss !
 Thou art a scholar, Lycius, and must know
 That finer spirits cannot breathe below 280
 In human climes, and live. Alas ! poor youth,
 What taste of purer air hast thou to soothe
 My essence ? What serener palaces,
 Where I may all my many senses please,
 And by mysterious sleights a hundred thirsts appease ? 285
 It cannot be — Adieu ! " So said, she rose
 Tiptoe with white arms spread. He, sick to lose
 The amorous promise of her lone complain,
 Swoon'd, murmuring of love, and pale with pain.
 The cruel lady, without any show 290

Of sorrow for her tender favourite's woe,
 But rather, if her eyes could brighter be,
 With brighter eyes and slow amenity,
 Put her new lips to his, and gave afresh
 The life she had so tangled in her mesh : 295
 And as he from one trance was waking
 Into another, she began to sing,
 Happy in beauty, life, and love, and every thing,
 A song of love, too sweet for earthly lyres,
 While, like held breath, the stars drew in their panting
 fires. 300

And then she whisper'd in such trembling tone,
 As those who, safe together met alone
 For the first time through many anguished days,
 Use other speech than looks ; bidding him raise
 His drooping head, and clear his soul of doubt, 305
 For that she was a woman, and without
 Any more subtle fluid in her veins
 Than throbbing blood, and that the self-same pains
 Inhabited her frail-strung heart as his.

And next she wonder'd how his eyes could miss 310
 Her face so long in Corinth, where, she said,
 She dwelt but half retired, and there had led
 Days happy as the gold coin could invent
 Without the aid of love ; yet in content
 Till she saw him, as once she pass'd him by, 315
 Where 'gainst a column he leant thoughtfully
 At Venus' temple porch, 'mid baskets heap'd
 Of amorous herbs and flowers, newly reap'd
 Late on that eve, as 't was the night before
 The Adonian feast ; whereof she saw no more 320
 But wept alone those days, for why should she adore ?
 Lycius from death awoke into amaze.
 To see her still, and singing so sweet lays ;

Then from amaze into delight he fell
 To hear her whisper woman's lore so well ; 325
 And every word she spake entic'd him on
 To unperplexed delight and pleasure known.
 Let the mad poets say whate'er they please
 Of the sweets of Fairies, Peris, Goddesses,
 There is not such a treat among them all, 330
 Haunters of cavern, lake, and waterfall,
 As a real woman, lineal indeed
 From Pyrrha's pebbles or old Adam's seed.
 Thus gentle Lamia judg'd, and judg'd aright,
 That Lycius could not love in half a fright, 335
 So threw the goddess off, and won his heart
 More pleasantly by playing woman's part,
 With no more awe than what her beauty gave,
 That, while it smote, still guaranteed to save.
 Lycius to all made eloquent reply, 340
 Marrying to every word a twinborn sigh ;
 And last, pointing to Corinth, ask'd her sweet,
 If 't was too far that night for her soft feet.
 The way was short, for Lamia's eagerness
 Made, by a spell, the triple league decrease 345
 To a few paces ; not at all surmis'd
 By blinded Lycius, so in her compris'd.
 They pass'd the city gates, he knew not how,
 So noiseless, and he never thought to know.

As men talk in a dream, so Corinth all, 350
 Throughout her palaces imperial.
 And all her populous streets and temples lewd,
 Mutter'd, like tempest in the distance brew'd.
 To the wide-spreaded night above her towers.
 Men, women, rich and poor, in the cool hours, 355
 Shuffled their sandals o'er the pavement white,

Companion'd or alone : while many a light
 Flar'd, here and there, from wealthy festivals,
 And threw their moving shadows on the walls,
 Or found them clustered in the cornic'd shade 360
 Of some arched temple door, or dusky colonnade.

Muffling his face, of greeting friends in fear,
 Her fingers he press'd hard, as one came near
 With curled gray beard, sharp eyes, and smooth bald
 crown,

Slow-stepped, and robed in philosophic gown : 365
 Lycius shrank closer, as they met and past,
 Into his mantle, adding wings to haste,
 While hurried Lamia trembled: "Ah," said he,
 "Why do you shudder, love, so ruefully?
 Why does your tender palm dissolve in dew?" — 370
 "I'm wearied," said fair Lamia; "tell me who
 Is that old man? I cannot bring to mind
 His features: — Lycius! wherefore did you blind
 Yourself from his quick eyes?" Lycius replied,
 "'T is Apollonius sage, my trusty guide 375
 And good instructor: but to-night he seems
 The ghost of folly haunting my sweet dreams."

While yet he spake they had arrived before
 A pillared porch, with lofty portal door,
 Where hung a silver lamp, whose phosphor glow 380
 Reflected in the slabbed steps below.
 Mild as a star in winter: for so new,
 And so unsullied was the marble's hue,
 So through the crystal polish, liquid fine,
 Ran the dark veins, that none but feet divine 385
 Could e'er have touch'd there. Sounds Æolian
 Breath'd from the hinges, as the ample span

Of the wide doors disclos'd a place unknown
Some time to any, but those two alone.
And a few Persian mutes, who that same year 390
Were seen about the markets: none knew where
They could inhabit; the most curious
Were foil'd, who watch'd to trace them to their house:
And but the flitter-winged verse must tell.
For truth's sake, what woe afterwards befell. 395
'T would humour many a heart to leave them thus,
Shut from the busy world of more incredulous.

PART II.

LOVE in a hut, with water and a crust,
 Is — Love, forgive us! — cinders, ashes, dust;
 Love in a palace is perhaps at last
 More grievous torment than a hermit's fast: —
 That is a doubtful tale from fairy land, §
 Hard for the non-elect to understand.
 Had Lycius liv'd to hand his story down,
 He might have given the moral a fresh frown,
 Or clench'd it quite: but too short was their bliss
 To breed distrust and hate, that make the soft voice hiss. 10
 Besides, there, nightly, with terrific glare,
 Love, jealous grown of so complete a pair,
 Hover'd and buzz'd his wings, with fearful roar,
 Above the lintel of their chamber door,
 And down the passage cast a glow upon the floor. 15

For all this came a ruin: side by side
 They were enthroned, in the eventide,
 Upon a couch, near to a curtaining
 Whose airy texture, from a golden string,
 Floated into the room, and let appear 20
 Unveil'd the summer heaven, blue and clear,
 Betwixt two marble shafts: — there they repos'd,
 Where use had made it sweet, with eyelids closed,
 Saving a tithe which love still open kept,
 That they might see each other while they almost slept; 25
 When from the slope side of a suburb hill,
 Deafening the swallow's twitter, came a thrill
 Of trumpets — Lycius started — the sounds fled,
 But left a thought, a buzzing in his head.

For the first time, since first he harbour'd in 30
 That purple-lined palace of sweet sin,
 His spirit pass'd beyond its golden bourn
 Into the noisy world almost forsworn.
 The lady, ever watchful, penetrant,
 Saw this with pain, so arguing a want 35
 Of something more, more than her empery
 Of joys ; and she began to moan and sigh
 Because he mus'd beyond her, knowing well
 That but a moment's thought is passion's passing-bell.
 " Why do you sigh, fair creature ? " whisper'd he : 40
 " Why do you think ? " return'd she tenderly :
 " You have deserted me ; — where am I now ?
 Not in your heart while care weighs on your brow :
 No, no, you have dismiss'd me ; and I go
 From your breast houseless : ay, it must be so." 45
 He answer'd, bending to her open eyes,
 Where he was mirror'd small in paradise,
 " My silver planet, both of eve and morn !
 Why will you plead yourself so sad forlorn,
 While I am striving how to fill my heart 50
 With deeper crimson, and a double smart ?
 How to entangle, trammel up and snare
 Your soul in mine, and labyrinth you there
 Like the hid scent in an unbudded rose ?
 Ay, a sweet kiss — you see your mighty woes. 55
 My thoughts ! shall I unveil them ? Listen then !
 What mortal hath a prize, that other men
 May be confounded and abash'd withal,
 But lets it sometimes pace abroad majestic,
 And triumph, as in thee I should rejoice 60
 Amid the hoarse alarm of Corinth's voice.
 Let my foes choke, and my friends shout afar,
 While through the thronged streets your bridal car

Wheels round its dazzling spokes." — The lady's cheek
 Trembled ; she nothing said, but, pale and meek, 65
 Arose and knelt before him, wept a rain
 Of sorrows at his words ; at last with pain
 Beseeching him, the while his hand she wrung,
 To change his purpose. He thereat was stung,
 Perverse, with stronger fancy to reclaim 70
 Her wild and timid nature to his aim :
 Besides, for all his love, in self-despite,
 Against his better self, he took delight
 Luxurious in her sorrows, soft and new.
 His passion, cruel grown, took on a hue 75
 Fierce and sanguineous as 't was possible
 In one whose brow had no dark veins to swell.
 Fine was the mitigated fury, like
 Apollo's presence when in act to strike
 The serpent — Ha, the serpent ! certes, she 80
 Was none. She burnt, she lov'd the tyranny,
 And, all subdued, consented to the hour
 When to the bridal he should lead his paramour.
 Whispering in midnight silence, said the youth,
 " Sure some sweet name thou hast, though, by my truth, 85
 I have not ask'd it, ever thinking thee
 Not mortal, but of heavenly progeny,
 As still I do. Hast any mortal name,
 Fit appellation for this dazzling frame ?
 Or friends or kinsfolk on the citted earth, 90
 To share our marriage feast and nuptial mirth ?"
 " I have no friends," said Lamia, " no, not one ;
 My presence in wide Corinth hardly known :
 My parents' bones are in their dusty urns
 Sepulchred, where no kindled incense burns, 95
 Seeing all their luckless race are dead, save me,
 And I neglect the holy rite for thee.

Even as you list invite your many guests ;
 But if, as now it seems, your vision rests
 With any pleasure on me, do not bid 100
 Old Apollonius — from him keep me hid.”
 Lycius, perplex'd at words so blind and blank,
 Made close inquiry ; from whose touch she shrank,
 Feigning a sleep ; and he to the dull shade
 Of deep sleep in a moment was betray'd. 105

It was the custom then to bring away
 The bride from home at blushing shut of day,
 Veiled, in a chariot, heralded along
 By strewn flowers, torches, and a marriage song,
 With other pageants : but this fair unknown 110
 Had not a friend. So being left alone
 (Lycius was gone to summon all his kin),
 And knowing surely she could never win
 His foolish heart from its mad pompousness,
 She set herself, high-thoughted, how to dress 115
 The misery in fit magnificence.
 She did so, but 't is doubtful how and whence
 Came, and who were her subtle servitors.
 About the halls, and to and from the doors,
 There was a noise of wings, till in short space 120
 The glowing banquet-room shone with wide-arched grace.
 A haunting music, sole perhaps and lone
 Supportress of the fairy roof, made moan
 Throughout, as fearful the whole charm might fade.
 Fresh carved cedar, mimicking a glade 125
 Of palm and plantain, met from either side,
 High in the midst, in honour of the bride :
 Two palms and then two plantains, and so on,
 From either side their stems branch'd one to one
 All down the aisled place ; and beneath all 130

There ran a stream of lamps straight on from wall to
wall.

So canopied, lay an untasted feast
Teeming with odours. Lamia, regal drest,
Silently paced about, and as she went,
In pale contented sort of discontent, 135
Mission'd her viewless servants to enrich
The fretted splendour of each nook and niche.
Between the tree-stems, marbled plain at first,
Came jasper panels ; then, anon, there burst
Forth creeping imagery of slighter trees, 140
And with the larger wove in small intricacies.
Approving all, she faded at self-will,
And shut the chamber up, close, hushed and still,
Complete and ready for the revels rude,
When dreadful guests would come to spoil her solitude. 145

The day appear'd, and all the gossip rout.
O senseless Lycius ! Madman ! wherefore flout
The silent-blessing fate, warm cloistered hours,
And show to common eyes these secret bowers ?
The herd approach'd ; each guest, with busy brain, 150
Arriving at the portal, gaz'd amain,
And enter'd marveling : for they knew the street,
Remember'd it from childhood all complete
Without a gap, yet ne'er before had seen
That royal porch, that high-built fair demesne ; 155
So in they hurried all, mazed, curious and keen :
Save one, who look'd thereon with eye severe,
And with calm-planted steps walk'd in austere ;
'T was Apollonius : something too he laugh'd,
As though some knotty problem, that had daft 160
His patient thought, had now begun to thaw,
And solve and melt : — 't was just as he foresaw.

He met within the murmurous vestibule
 His young disciple. " 'Tis no common rule,
 Lycius," said he, " for uninvited guest 165
 To force himself upon you, and infest
 With an unbidden presence the bright throng
 Of younger friends ; yet must I do this wrong,
 And you forgive me." Lycius blush'd, and led
 The old man through the inner doors broad-spread ; 170
 With reconciling words and courteous mien
 Turning into sweet milk the sophist's spleen.

Of wealthy lustre was the banquet-room,
 Fill'd with pervading brilliance and perfume :
 Before each lucid panel fuming stood 175
 A censer fed with myrrh and spiced wood,
 Each by a sacred tripod held aloft,
 Whose slender feet wide-swerv'd upon the soft
 Wool-woofed carpets : fifty wreaths of smoke
 From fifty censers their light voyage took 180
 To the high roof, still mimick'd as they rose
 Along the mirrored walls by twin-clouds odorous.
 Twelve sphered tables, by silk seats inspher'd,
 High as the level of a man's breast rear'd
 On libbard's paws, upheld the heavy gold 185
 Of cups and goblets, and the store thrice told
 Of Ceres' horn, and, in huge vessels, wine
 Came from the gloomy tun with merry shine.
 Thus loaded with a feast the tables stood,
 Each shrining in the midst the image of a God. 190

When in an antechamber every guest
 Had felt the cold full sponge to pleasure press'd,
 By minist'ring slaves, upon his hands and feet,
 And fragrant oils with ceremony meet

Pour'd on his hair, they all mov'd to the feast 195
 In white robes, and themselves in order placed
 Around the silken couches, wondering
 Whence all this mighty cost and blaze of wealth could
 spring.

Soft went the music the soft air along,
 While fluent Greek a vowel'd undersong 200
 Kept up among the guests, discoursing low
 At first, for scarcely was the wine at flow ;
 But when the happy vintage touch'd their brains,
 Louder they talk, and louder come the strains
 Of powerful instruments : — the gorgeous dyes, 205
 The space, the splendour of the draperies,
 The roof of awful richness, nectarous cheer,
 Beautiful slaves, and Lamia's self, appear,
 Now, when the wine has done its rosy deed,
 And every soul from human trammels freed, 210
 No more so strange ; for merry wine, sweet wine,
 Will make Elysian shades not too fair, too divine.
 Soon was God Bacchus at meridian height ;
 Flush'd were their cheeks, and bright eyes double bright :
 Garlands of every green, and every scent 215
 From vales deflower'd, or forest-trees branch-rent,
 In baskets of bright osier'd gold were brought
 High as the handles heap'd, to suit the thought
 Of every guest ; that each, as he did please,
 Might fancy-fit his brows, silk-pillow'd at his ease. 220

What wreath for Lamia ? What for Lycius ?
 What for the sage, old Apollonius ?
 Upon her aching forehead be there hung
 The leaves of willow and of adder's tongue ;
 And for the youth, quick, let us strip for him 225
 The thyrsus, that his watching eyes may swim

Into forgetfulness ; and, for the sage,
 Let spear-grass and the spiteful thistle wage
 War on his temples. Do not all charms fly
 At the mere touch of cold philosophy ? 230
 There was an awful rainbow once in heaven :
 We know her woof, her texture : she is given
 In the dull catalogue of common things.
 Philosophy will clip an Angel's wings,
 Conquer all mysteries by rule and line, 235
 Empty the haunted air, and gnomed mine —
 Unweave a rainbow, as it erewhile made
 The tender-personed Lamia melt into a shade.

By her glad Lycius sitting, in chief place,
 Scarce saw in all the room another face, 240
 Till, checking his love trance, a cup he took
 Full brimmed, and opposite sent forth a look
 'Cross the broad table, to beseech a glance
 From his old teacher's wrinkled countenance,
 And pledge him. The bald-head philosopher 245
 Had fix'd his eye, without a twinkle or stir
 Full on the alarmed beauty of the bride,
 Brow-beating her fair form, and troubling her sweet pride.
 Lycius then press'd her hand, with devout touch,
 As pale it lay upon the rosy couch : 250
 'T was icy, and the cold ran through his veins ;
 Then sudden it grew hot, and all the pains
 Of an unnatural heat shot to his heart.
 " Lamia, what means this ? Wherefore dost thou start ?
 Know'st thou that man ? " Poor Lamia answer'd not. 255
 He gaz'd into her eyes, and not a jot
 Own'd they the lovelorn piteous appeal :
 More, more he gaz'd : his human senses reel :
 Some hungry spell that loveliness absorbs ;

There was no recognition in those orbs. 260
 "Lamia!" he cried — and no soft-toned reply.
 The many heard, and the loud revelry
 Grew hush; the stately music no more breathes;
 The myrtle sicken'd in a thousand wreaths.
 By faint degrees, voice, lute, and pleasure ceas'd; 265
 A deadly silence step by step increas'd,
 Until it seem'd a horrid presence there,
 And not a man but felt the terror in his hair.
 "Lamia!" he shriek'd; and nothing but the shriek
 With its sad echo did the silence break. 270
 "Begone, foul dream!" he cried, gazing again
 In the bride's face, where now no azure vein
 Wander'd on fair-spaced temples; no soft bloom
 Misted the cheek; no passion to illumine
 The deep-recessed vision: — all was blight: 275
 Lamia, no longer fair, there sat a deadly white.
 "Shut, shut those juggling eyes, thou ruthless man!
 Turn them aside, wretch! or the righteous ban
 Of all the Gods, whose dreadful images
 Here represent their shadowy presences, 280
 May pierce them on the sudden with the thorn
 Of painful blindness; leaving thee forlorn,
 In trembling dotage to the feeblest fright
 Of conscience, for their long offended might,
 For all thine impious proud-heart sophistries, 285
 Unlawful magic, and enticing lies.
 Corinthians! look upon that gray-beard wretch!
 Mark how, possess'd, his lashless eyelids stretch
 Around his demon eyes! Corinthians, see!
 My sweet bride withers at their potency." 290
 "Fool!" said the sophist, in an undertone
 Gruff with contempt; which a death-nighing moan
 From Lycius answer'd, as heart-struck and lost,

He sank supine beside the aching ghost.
 "Fool ! Fool !" repeated he, while his eyes still 295
 Relented not, nor mov'd ; "from every ill
 Of life have I preserv'd thee to this day,
 And shall I see thee made a serpent's prey ?"
 Then Lamia breath'd death breath : the sophist's eye,
 Like a sharp spear, went through her utterly, 300
 Keen, cruel, perceant, stinging : she, as well
 As her weak hand could any meaning tell,
 Motion'd him to be silent ; vainly so,
 He look'd and look'd again a level — No !
 "A Serpent !" echoed he ; no sooner said, 305
 Than with a frightful scream she vanished :
 And Lycius' arms were empty of delight,
 As were his limbs of life, from that same night.
 On the high couch he lay ! — his friends came round —
 Supported him — no pulse or breath they found. 310
 And, in its marriage robe, the heavy body wound.¹

¹ Philostratus, in his fourth book *De Vita Apollonii*, hath a memorable instance in this kind, which I may not omit, of one Menippus Lycius, a young man twenty-five years of age, that going betwixt Cenchreas and Corinth, met such a phantasm in the habit of a fair gentlewoman, which taking him by the hand, carried him home to her house, in the suburbs of Corinth, and told him she was a Phœnician by birth, and if he would tarry with her, he should hear her sing and play, and drink such wine as never any drank, and no man should molest him ; but she, being fair and lovely, would live and die with him, that was fair and lovely to behold. The young man, a philosopher, otherwise staid and discreet, able to moderate his passions, though not this of love, tarried with her a while to his great content, and at last married her, to whose wedding, amongst other guests, came Apollonius ; who, by some probable conjectures, found her out to be a serpent, a lamia ; and that all her furniture was, like Tantalus's gold, described by Homer, no substance but mere illusions. When she saw herself descried, she wept, and desired Apollonius to be silent, but he would not be moved, and thereupon she, plate, house, and all that was in it, vanished in an instant : many thousands took notice of this fact, for it was done in the midst of Greece." Burton's *Anatomy of Melancholy*. Part 3. Sect. 2. Memb. I. Subs. I.

ISABELLA; OR THE POT OF BASIL.

A STORY FROM BOCCACCIO.

I.

FAIR Isabel, poor simple Isabel !

Lorenzo, a young palmer in Love's eye !
They could not in the self-same mansion dwell
Without some stir of heart, some malady ;
They could not sit at meals but feel how well 5
It soothed each to be the other by ;
They could not, sure, beneath the same roof sleep
But to each other dream, and nightly weep.

II.

With every morn their love grew tenderer,
With every eve deeper and tenderer still ; 10
He might not in house, field, or garden stir,
But her full shape would all his seeing fill ;
And his continual voice was pleasanter
To her, than noise of trees or hidden rill ;
Her lute-string gave an echo of his name, 15
She spoilt her half-done broidery with the same.

III.

He knew whose gentle hand was at the latch,
Before the door had given her to his eyes ;
And from her chamber window he would catch
Her beauty farther than the falcon spies ; 20

And constant as her vespers would he watch,
 Because her face was turn'd to the same skies ;
 And with sick longing all the night outwear,
 To hear her morning-step upon the stair.

IV.

A whole long month of May in this sad plight 25
 Made their cheeks paler by the break of June :
 "To-morrow will I bow to my delight,
 To-morrow will I ask my lady's boon." —
 "O may I never see another night,
 Lorenzo, if thy lips breathe not love's tune." — 30
 So spake they to their pillows ; but, alas,
 Honeyless days and days did he let pass ;

V.

Until sweet Isabella's untouched cheek
 Fell sick within the rose's just domain,
 Fell thin as a young mother's, who doth seek 35
 By every lull to cool her infant's pain :
 "How ill she is," said he, "I may not speak,
 And yet I will, and tell my love all plain :
 If looks speak love-laws, I will drink her tears,
 And at the least 't will startle off her cares." 40

VI.

So said he one fair morning, and all day
 His heart beat awfully against his side ;
 And to his heart he inwardly did pray
 For power to speak ; but still the ruddy tide
 Stifled his voice, and puls'd resolve away — 45
 Fever'd his high conceit of such a bride.
 Yet brought him to the meekness of a child :
 Alas ! when passion is both meek and wild !

VII.

So once more he had wak'd and anguished
 A dreary night of love and misery, 50
 If Isabel's quick eye had not been wed
 To every symbol on his forehead high ;
 She saw it waxing very pale and dead,
 And straight all flush'd ; so, lisped tenderly,
 "Lorenzo !" — here she ceas'd her timid quest, 55
 But in her tone and look he read the rest.

VIII.

"O Isabella, I can half perceive
 That I may speak my grief into thine ear ;
 If thou didst ever any thing believe,
 Believe how I love thee, believe how near 60
 My soul is to its doom : I would not grieve
 Thy hand by unwelcome pressing, would not fear
 Thine eyes by gazing ; but I cannot live
 Another night, and not my passion shrive.

IX.

"Love ! thou art leading me from wintry cold ; 65
 Lady! thou leadest me to summer clime,
 And I must taste the blossoms that unfold
 In its ripe warmth this gracious morning time."
 So said, his erewhile timid lips grew bold,
 And poesied with hers in dewy rhyme : 70
 Great bliss was with them, and great happiness
 Grew, like a lusty flower in June's caress.

X.

Parting they seem'd to tread upon the air,
 Twin roses by the zephyr blown apart
 Only to meet again more close, and share 75
 The inward fragrance of each other's heart.

She, to her chamber gone, a ditty fair
Sang, of delicious love and honeyed dart ;
He with light steps went up a western hill,
And bade the sun farewell, and joy'd his fill. 80

XI.

All close they met again, before the dusk
Had taken from the stars its pleasant veil ;
All close they met, all eves, before the dusk
Had taken from the stars its pleasant veil,
Close in a bower of hyacinth and musk, 85
Unknown of any, free from whispering tale.
Ah ! better had it been for ever so,
Than idle ears should pleasure in their woe.

XII.

Were they unhappy then ? — It cannot be —
Too many tears for lovers have been shed, 90
Too many sighs give we to them in fee,
Too much of pity after they are dead,
Too many doleful stories do we see,
Whose matter in bright gold were best be read ;
Except in such a page where Theseus' spouse, 95
Over the pathless waves towards him bows.

XIII.

But, for the general award of love,
The little sweet doth kill much bitterness ;
Though Dido silent is in under-grove,
And Isabella's was a great distress. 100
Though young Lorenzo in warm Indian clove
Was not embalm'd, this truth is not the less —
Even bees, the little almsmen of spring-bowers,
Know there is richest juice in poison-flowers.

XIV.

With her two brothers this fair lady dwelt, 105
 Enriched from ancestral merchandise,
 And for them many a weary hand did swelt
 In torched mines and noisy factories,
 And many once proud-quivered loins did melt
 In blood from stinging whip ; — with hollow eyes 110
 Many all day in dazzling river stood,
 To take the rich-ored driftings of the flood.

XV.

For them the Ceylon diver held his breath,
 And went all naked to the hungry shark ;
 For them his ears gush'd blood ; for them in death 115
 The seal on the cold ice with piteous bark
 Lay full of darts ; for them alone did seethe
 A thousand men in troubles wide and dark :
 Half-ignorant, they turn'd an easy wheel,
 That set sharp racks at work, to pinch and peel. 120

XVI.

Why were they proud ? Because their marble founts
 Gush'd with more pride than do a wretch's tears?—
 Why were they proud ? Because fair orange-mounts
 Were of more soft ascent than lazar stairs?—
 Why were they proud ? Because red-lined accounts 125
 Were richer than the songs of Grecian years?—
 Why were they proud ? again we ask aloud,
 Why in the name of Glory were they proud ?

XVII.

Yet were these Florentines as self-retired
 In hungry pride and gainful cowardice, 130
 As two close Hebrews in that land inspired,
 Pal'd in and vineyarded from beggar-spies ;

The hawks of ship-mast forests — the untired
 And panniered mules for ducats and old lies —
 Quick cat's-paws on the generous stray-away, — 135
 Great wits in Spanish, Tuscan, and Malay.

XVIII.

How was it these same ledger-men could spy
 Fair Isabella in her downy nest?
 How could they find out in Lorenzo's eye
 A straying from his toil? Hot Egypt's pest 140
 Into their vision covetous and sly!
 How could these money-bags see east and west? —
 Yet so they did — and every dealer fair
 Must see behind, as doth the hunted hare.

XIX.

O eloquent and famed Boccaccio! 145
 Of thee we now should ask forgiving boon,
 And of thy spicy myrtles as they blow,
 And of thy roses amorous of the moon,
 And of thy lilies, that do paler grow
 Now they can no more hear thy ghittern's tune, 150
 For venturing syllables that ill beseem
 The quiet glooms of such a piteous theme.

XX.

Grant thou a pardon here, and then the tale
 Shall move on soberly, as it is meet;
 There is no other crime, no mad assail 155
 To make old prose in modern rhyme more sweet:
 But it is done — succeed the verse or fail —
 To honour thee, and thy gone spirit greet;
 To stead thee as a verse in English tongue,
 An echo of thee in the north-wind sung. 160

XXI.

These brethren having found by many signs
 What love Lorenzo for their sister had,
 And how she lov'd him too, each unconfines
 His bitter thoughts to other, wellnigh mad
 That he, the servant of their trade designs, 165
 Should in their sister's love be blithe and glad,
 When 't was their plan to coax her by degrees
 To some high noble and his olive-trees.

XXII.

And many a jealous conference had they,
 And many times they bit their lips alone, 170
 Before they fix'd upon a surest way
 To make the youngster for his crime atone ;
 And at the last, these men of cruel clay
 Cut Mercy with a sharp knife to the bone ;
 For they resolved in some forest dim 175
 To kill Lorenzo, and there bury him.

XXIII.

So on a pleasant morning, as he leant
 Into the sunrise, o'er the balustrade
 Of the garden-terrace, towards him they bent
 Their footing through the dews ; and to him said, 180
 " You seem there in the quiet of content,
 Lorenzo, and we are most loth to invade
 Calm speculation ; but if you are wise,
 Bestride your steed while cold is in the skies.

XXIV.

" To-day we purpose, ay, this hour we mount 185
 To spur three leagues towards the Apennine ;
 Come down, we pray thee, ere the hot sun count
 His dewy rosary on the eglantine."

Lorenzo, courteously as he was wont,
 Bow'd a fair greeting to these serpents' whine ; 196
 And went in haste, to get in readiness,
 With belt, and spur, and bracing huntsman's dress.

XXV.

And as he to the court-yard pass'd along,
 Each third step did he pause, and listen'd oft
 If he could hear his lady's matin-song, 195
 Or the light whisper of her footstep soft ;
 And as he thus over his passion hung,
 He heard a laugh full musical aloft ;
 When, looking up, he saw her features bright
 Smile through an in-door lattice, all delight. 200

XXVI.

"Love, Isabel!" said he, "I was in pain
 Lest I should miss to bid thee a good morrow :
 Ah! what if I should lose thee, when so fain
 I am to stifle all the heavy sorrow
 Of a poor three hours' absence? but we 'll gain 205
 Out of the amorous dark what day doth borrow.
 "Good-bye! I 'll soon be back." — "Good-bye!" said she :—
 And as he went she chanted merrily.

XXVII.

So the two brothers and their murdered man
 Rode past fair Florence, to where Arno's stream 210
 Gurgles through straitened banks, and still doth fan
 Itself with dancing bulrush, and the bream
 Keeps head against the freshets. Sick and wan
 The brothers' faces in the ford did seem,
 Lorenzo's flush with love. — They pass'd the water 215
 Into a forest quiet for the slaughter.

XXVIII.

There was Lorenzo slain and buried in,
 There in that forest did his great love cease ;
 Ah! when a soul doth thus its freedom win,
 It aches in loneliness — is ill at peace 220
 As the break-covert blood-hounds of such sin :
 They dipp'd their swords in the water, and did tease
 Their horses homeward, with convulsed spur,
 Each richer by his being a murderer.

XXIX.

They told their sister how, with sudden speed, 225
 Lorenzo had ta'en ship for foreign lands,
 Because of some great urgency and need
 In their affairs, requiring trusty hands.
 Poor Girl! put on thy stifling widow's weed,
 And 'scape at once from Hope's accursed bands ; 230
 To-day thou wilt not see him, nor to-morrow,
 And the next day will be a day of sorrow.

XXX.

She weeps alone for pleasures not to be ;
 Sorely she wept until the night came on,
 And then, instead of love, O misery ! 235
 She brooded o'er the luxury alone :
 His image in the dusk she seem'd to see,
 And to the silence made a gentle moan,
 Spreading her perfect arms upon the air,
 And on her couch low murmuring, "Where? O where?" 240

XXXI.

But Selfishness, Love's cousin, held not long
 Its fiery vigil in her single breast ;
 She fretted for the golden hour, and hung
 Upon the time with feverish unrest —

Not long — for soon into her heart a throng
Of higher occupants, a richer zest,
Came tragic ; passion not to be subdued,
And sorrow for her love in travels rude. 245

XXXII.

In the mid-days of autumn, on their eyes
The breath of Winter comes from far away, 250
And the sick west continually bereaves
Of some gold tinge, and plays a roundelay
Of death among the bushes and the leaves,
To make all bare before he dares to stray
From his north cavern. So sweet Isabel 255
By gradual decay from beauty fell,

XXXIII.

Because Lorenzo came not. Oftentimes
She ask'd her brothers, with an eye all pale,
Striving to be itself, what dungeon climes
Could keep him off so long ? They spake a tale — 260
Time after time, to quiet her. Their crimes
Came on them, like a smoke from Hinnom's vale ;
And every night in dreams they groan'd aloud,
To see their sister in her snowy shroud.

XXXIV.

And she had died in drowsy ignorance, 265
But for a thing more deadly dark than all ;
It came like a fierce potion, drunk by chance,
Which saves a sick man from the feathered pall
For some few gasping moments ; like a lance,
Waking an Indian from his cloudy hall 270
With cruel pierce, and bringing him again
Sense of the gnawing fire at heart and brain.

XXXV.

It was a vision. — In the drowsy gloom,
 The dull of midnight, at her couch's foot
 Lorenzo stood, and wept : the forest tomb 275
 Had marr'd his glossy hair which once could shoot
 Lustre into the sun, and put cold doom
 Upon his lips, and taken the soft lute
 From his lorn voice, and past his loamed ears
 Had made a miry channel for his tears. 280

XXXVI.

Strange sound it was, when the pale shadow spake ;
 For there was striving, in its piteous tongue,
 To speak as when on earth it was awake,
 And Isabella on its music hung :
 Languor there was in it, and tremulous shake, 285
 As in a palsied Druid's harp unstrung ;
 And through it moan'd a ghostly under-song,
 Like hoarse night-gusts sepulchral briars among.

XXXVII.

Its eyes, though wild, were still all dewy bright
 With love, and kept all phantom fear aloof 290
 From the poor girl by magic of their light,
 The while it did unthread the horrid woof
 Of the late darkened time, — the murderous spite
 Of pride and avarice, — the dark pine roof
 In the forest, — and the sodden turfed dell, 295
 Where, without any word, from stabs he fell.

XXXVIII.

Saying moreover, " Isabel, my sweet !
 Red whortle-berries droop above my head,
 And a large flint-stone weighs upon my feet ;
 Around me beeches and high chestnuts shed 300

Their leaves and prickly nuts; a sheep-fold bleat
 Comes from beyond the river to my bed :
 Go, shed one tear upon my heather-bloom,
 And it shall comfort me within the tomb.

XXXIX.

“ I am a shadow now, alas ! alas ! 305
 Upon the skirts of human nature dwelling
 Alone : I chant alone the holy mass,
 While little sounds of life are round me kneeling,
 And glossy bees at noon do fieldward pass,
 And many a chapel bell the hour is telling, 310
 Paining me through : those sounds grow strange to me,
 And thou art distant in Humanity.

XL.

“ I know what was, I feel full well what is,
 And I should rage, if spirits could go mad ;
 Though I forget the taste of earthly bliss, 315
 That paleness warms my grave, as though I had
 A Seraph chosen from the bright abyss
 To be my spouse : thy paleness makes me glad ;
 Thy beauty grows upon me, and I feel
 A greater love through all my essence steal.” 320

XLI.

The Spirit mourn'd “ Adieu ! ” — dissolv'd, and left
 The atom darkness in a slow turmoil ;
 As when of healthful midnight sleep bereft,
 Thinking on rugged hours and fruitless toll,
 We put our eyes into a pillow cleft, 325
 And see the spangly gloom froth up and boil :
 It made sad Isabella's eyelids ache,
 And in the dawn she started up awake ;

XLII.

" Ha ! ha ! " said she, " I knew not this hard life,
 I thought the worst was simple misery ; 330
 I thought some Fate with pleasure or with strife
 Portion'd us — happy days, or else to die ;
 But there is crime — a brother's bloody knife !
 Sweet Spirit, thou hast school'd my infancy :
 I 'll visit thee for this, and kiss thine eyes, 335
 And greet thee morn and even in the skies."

XLIII.

When the full morning came, she had devis'd
 How she might secret to the forest hie ;
 How she might find the clay, so dearly priz'd,
 And sing to it one latest lullaby ; 340
 How her short absence might be unsurmis'd,
 While she the inmost of the dream would try.
 Resolv'd, she took with her an aged nurse,
 And went into that dismal forest-hearse.

XLIV.

See, as they creep along the river side, 345
 How she doth whisper to that aged Dame,
 And, after looking round the champaign wide,
 Shows her a knife. — " What feverous hectic flame
 Burns in thee, child ? — What good can thee betide,
 That thou should'st smile again ? " — The evening came, 350
 And they had found Lorenzo's earthy bed ;
 The flint was there, the berries at his head.

XLV.

Who hath not loiter'd in a green church yard,
 And let his spirit, like a demon-mole,
 Work through the clayey soil and gravel hard, 355
 To see skull, coffin'd bones, and funeral stole ;

Pitying each form that hungry Death hath marr'd,
And filling it once more with human soul ?
Ah ! this is holiday to what was felt
When Isabella by Lorenzo knelt. 360

XLVI.

She gaz'd into the fresh-thrown mould, as though
One glance did fully all its secrets tell ;
Clearly she saw, as other eyes would know
Pale limbs at bottom of a crystal well ;
Upon the murderous spot she seem'd to grow, 365
Like to a native lily of the dell :
Then with her knife, all sudden, she began
To dig more fervently than misers can.

XLVII.

Soon she turn'd up a soiled glove, whereon
Her silk had play'd in purple phantasies, 370
She kiss'd it with a lip more chill than stone,
And put it in her bosom, where it dries
And freezes utterly unto the bone
Those dainties made to still an infant's cries :
Then 'gan she work again ; nor stay'd her care, 375
But to throw back at times her veiling hair.

XLVIII.

That old nurse stood beside her wondering,
Until her heart felt pity to the core
At sight of such a dismal labouring,
And so she kneeled, with her locks all hoar, 380
And put her lean hands to the horrid thing :
Three hours they labour'd at this travail sore ;
At last they felt the kernel of the grave,
And Isabella did not stamp and rave.

XLIX.

Ah! wherefore all this wormy circumstance? 385
 Why linger at the yawning tomb so long?
 O for the gentleness of old Romance,
 The simple plaining of a minstrel's song!
 Fair reader, at the old tale take a glance,
 For here, in truth, it doth not well belong 390
 To speak: — O turn thee to the very tale,
 And taste the music of that vision pale.

L.

With duller steel than the Perséan sword
 They cut away no formless monster's head,
 But one, whose gentleness did well accord 395
 With death, as life. The ancient harps have said,
 Love never dies, but lives, immortal Lord:
 If Love impersonate was ever dead,
 Pale Isabella kiss'd it, and low moan'd.
 'Twas love; cold, — dead indeed, but not dethron'd. 400

LI.

In anxious secrecy they took it home,
 And then the prize was all for Isabel:
 She calm'd its wild hair with a golden comb,
 And all around each eye's sepulchral cell
 Pointed each fringed lash; the smeared loam 405
 With tears, as chilly as a dripping well,
 She drench'd away: — and still she comb'd, and kept
 Sighing all day — and still she kiss'd, and wept.

LII.

Then in a silken scarf, — sweet with the dews
 Of precious flowers pluck'd in Araby, 410
 And divine liquids come with odorous ooze
 Through the cold serpent pipe refreshfully, —

She wrapp'd it up ; and for its tomb did choose
A garden-pot, wherein she laid it by,
And cover'd it with mould, and o'er it set
Sweet Basil, which her tears kept ever wet. 415

LIII.

And she forgot the stars, the moon, and sun,
And she forgot the blue above the trees,
And she forgot the dells where waters run,
And she forgot the chilly autumn breeze ; 420
She had no knowledge when the day was done,
And the new morn she saw not : but in peace
Hung over her sweet Basil evermore,
And moisten'd it with tears unto the core.

LIV.

And so she ever fed it with thin tears, 425
Whence thick, and green, and beautiful it grew,
So that it smelt more balmy than its peers
Of Basil-tufts in Florence ; for it drew
Nurture besides, and life, from human fears,
From the fast mouldering head there shut from view : 430
So that the jewel, safely casketed,
Came forth, and in perfumed leafits spread.

LV.

O Melancholy, linger here awhile !
O Music, Music, breathe despondingly !
O Echo, Echo, from some sombre isle, 435
Unknown, Lethean, sigh to us — O sigh !
Spirits in grief, lift up your heads, and smile ;
Lift up your heads, sweet Spirits, heavily,
And make a pale light in your cypress glooms,
Tinting with silver wan your marble tombs. 440

LVI.

Moan hither, all ye syllables of woe,
 From the deep throat of sad Melpomene !
 Through bronzed lyre in tragic order go,
 And touch the strings into a mystery ;
 Sound mournfully upon the winds and low ; 445
 For simple Isabel is soon to be
 Among the dead : she withers, like a palm
 Cut by an Indian for its juicy balm.

LVII.

O leave the palm to wither by itself ;
 Let not quick Winter chill its dying hour ! — 450
 It may not be — those Baälites of pelf,
 Her brethren, noted the continual shower
 From her dead eyes ; and many a curious elf,
 Among her kindred, wonder'd that such dower
 Of youth and beauty should be thrown aside 455
 By one mark'd out to be a Noble's bride.

LVIII.

And, furthermore, her brethren wonder'd much
 Why she sat drooping by the Basil green,
 And why it flourish'd, as by magic touch ;
 Greatly they wonder'd what the thing might mean : 460
 They could not surely give belief, that such
 A very nothing would have power to wean
 Her from her own fair youth, and pleasures gay,
 And even remembrance of her love's delay.

LIX.

Therefore they watch'd a time when they might sift 465
 This hidden whim ; and long they watch'd in vain ;
 For seldom did she go to chapel-shrift,
 And seldom felt she any hunger-pain :

And when she left, she hurried back, as swift
 As bird on wing to breast its eggs again; 470
 And, patient as a hen-bird, sat her there
 Beside her Basil, weeping through her hair.

LX.

Yet they contriv'd to steal the Basil-pot,
 And to examine it in secret place:
 The thing was vile with green and livid spot, 475
 And yet they knew it was Lorenzo's face:
 The guerdon of their murder they had got,
 And so left Florence in a moment's space,
 Never to turn again. — Away they went,
 With blood upon their heads, to banishment. 480

LXI.

O Melancholy, turn thine eyes away!
 O Music, Music, breathe despondingly!
 O Echo, Echo, on some other day,
 From isles Lethean, sigh to us — O sigh!
 Spirits of grief, sing not your "Well-a-way!" 485
 For Isabel, sweet Isabel, will die;
 Will die a death too lone and incomplete,
 Now they have ta'en away her Basil sweet.

LXII.

Piteous she look'd on dead and senseless things,
 Asking for her lost Basil amorously: 490
 And with melodious chuckle in the strings
 Of her lorn voice, she oftentimes would cry
 After the Pilgrim in his wanderings,
 To ask him where her Basil was; and why
 'T was hid from her: "For cruel 't is," said she, 495
 "To steal my Basil-pot away from me."

LXIII.

And so she pined, and so she died forlorn,

Imploring for her Basil to the last.

No heart was there in Florence but did mourn

In pity of her love, so overcast.

500

And a sad ditty of this story born

From mouth to mouth through all the country pass'd :

Still is the burthen sung — "O cruelty,

To steal my Basil-pot away from me !"

THE EVE OF ST. MARK.

(UNFINISHED.)

UPON a Sabbath day it fell :
Twice holy was the Sabbath bell,
That call'd the folk to evening prayer ;
The city streets were clean and fair
From wholesome drench of April rains ; 5
And, on the western window-panes,
The chilly sunset faintly told
Of unmaturred green, valleys cold.
Of the green thorny bloomless hedge,
Of rivers new with spring-tide sedge, 10
Of primroses by sheltered rills,
And daisies on the aguish hills.

Twice holy was the Sabbath bell :
The silent streets were crowded well
With staid and pious companies, 15
Warm from their fireside orat'ries ;
And moving, with demurest air,
To even-song, and vesper prayer.
Each arched porch, and entry low,
Was fill'd with patient folk and slow, 20
With whispers hush, and shuffling feet,
While play'd the organ loud and sweet.

The bells had ceas'd, the prayers begun,
And Bertha had not yet half done

A curious volume, patch'd and torn, 25
 That all day long, from earliest morn,
 Had taken captive her two eyes,
 Among its golden broideries ;
 Perplex'd her with a thousand things, —
 The stars of Heaven, and angels' wings, 30
 Martyrs in a fiery blaze,
 Azure saints and silver rays,
 Moses' breastplate, and the seven
 Candlesticks John saw in Heaven,
 The winged Lion of Saint Mark, 35
 And the Covenantal Ark,
 With its many mysteries,
 Cherubim and golden mice.

Bertha was a maiden fair,
 Dwelling in th' old Minster-square ; 40
 From her fireside she could see,
 Sidelong, its rich antiquity,
 Far as the Bishop's garden-wall ;
 Where sycamores and elm trees tall,
 Full-leaved, the forest had outstript, 45
 By no sharp north-wind ever nipt,
 So shelter'd by the mighty pile.
 Bertha arose, and read awhile,
 With forehead 'gainst the window-pane.
 Again she tried, and then again, 50
 Until the dusk eve left her dark
 Upon the legend of St. Mark.
 From plaited lawn-frill, fine and thin,
 She lifted up her soft warm chin,
 With aching neck and swimming eyes 55
 And daz'd with saintly imag'ries.

All was gloom, and silent all,
 Save now and then the still foot-fall
 Of one returning homewards late,
 Past the echoing minster-gate. 60
 The clamorous daws, that all the day
 Above tree-tops and towers play,
 Pair by pair had gone to rest,
 Each in its ancient belfry-nest,
 Where asleep they fall betimes, 65
 To music and the drowsy chimes.

All was silent, all was gloom,
 Abroad and in the homely room :
 Down she sat, poor cheated soul !
 And struck a lamp from the dismal coal ; 70
 Lean'd forward, with bright drooping hair
 And slant book. full against the glare.
 Her shadow, in uneasy guise,
 Hover'd about, a giant size,
 On ceiling-beam and old oak chair, 75
 The parrot's cage, and panel square ;
 And the warm angled winter-screen,
 On which were many monsters seen,
 Call'd doves of Siam, Lima mice,
 And legless birds of Paradise, 80
 Macaw, and tender Av'davat,
 And silken-furred Angora cat.
 Untired she read, her shadow still
 Glower'd about, as it would fill
 The room with wildest forms and shades, 85
 As though some ghostly queen of spades
 Had come to mock behind her back,
 And dance, and ruffle her garments black.

Untired she read the legend page,
 Of holy Mark, from youth to age, 90
 On land, on sea, in pagan chains,
 Rejoicing for his many pains.
 Sometimes the learned eremite,
 With golden star, or dagger bright,
 Referr'd to pious poesies 95
 Written in smallest crow-quill size
 Beneath the text ; and thus the rhyme
 Was parcell'd out from time to time :
 — " Als writith he of swevenis,
 Men han beforne they wake in bliss, 100
 Whanne that hir friendes thinke him bound
 In crimped shroude farre under grounde ;
 And how a litling child mote be
 A saint er its nativitie,
 Gif that the modre (God her blesse !) 105
 Kepen in solitarinesse,
 And kissen devoute the holy croce,
 Of Goddes love, and Sathan's force, —
 He writith ; and thinges many mo
 Of swiche thinges I may not shew. 110
 Bot I must tellen verilie
 Somdel of Saintè Cicilie,
 And chieflie what he auctorethe
 Of Saintè Markis life and dethe : "

At length her constant eyelids come 115
 Upon the fervent martyrdom ;
 Then lastly to his holy shrine,
 Exalt amid the tapers' shine
 At Venice, —

THE EVE OF ST. AGNES.

I.

ST. AGNES' Eve — Ah, bitter chill it was !

The owl, for all his feathers, was a-cold :

The hare limp'd trembling through the frozen grass,

And silent was the flock in woolly fold :

Numb were the Beadsman's fingers, while he told 5

His rosary, and while his frosted breath,

Like pious incense from a censer old,

Seem'd taking flight for heaven, without a death,

Past the sweet Virgin's picture, while his prayer he saith.

II.

His prayer he saith, this patient, holy man ; 10

Then takes his lamp, and riseth from his knees,

And back returneth, meagre, barefoot, wan,

Along the chapel aisle by slow degrees :

The sculptured dead, on each side, seem to freeze,

Emprison'd in black, purgatorial rails : 15

Knights, ladies, praying in dumb orat'ries,

He passeth by : and his weak spirit fails

To think how they may ache in icy hoods and mails.

III.

Northward he turneth through a little door,

And scarce three steps, ere Music's golden tongue 20

Flatter'd to tears this aged man and poor ;

But no — already had his deathbell rung ;

The joys of all his life were said and sung :
 His was harsh penance on St. Agnes' Eve :
 Another way he went, and soon among 25
 Rough ashes sat he for his soul's reprieve,
 And all night kept awake, for sinners' sake to grieve.

IV.

That ancient Beadsman heard the prelude soft ;
 And so it chanc'd, for many a door was wide,
 From hurry to and fro. Soon, up aloft, 30
 The silver, snarling trumpets 'gan to chide :
 The level chambers, ready with their pride,
 Were glowing to receive a thousand guests :
The carved angels, ever eager-eyed,
Star'd, where upon their heads the cornice rests, 35
With hair blown back, and wings put cross-wise on their
breasts.

V.

At length burst in the argent revelry,
 With plume, tiara, and all rich array,
 Numerous as shadows haunting fairly
 The brain, new stuff'd, in youth, with triumphs gay 40
 Of old romance. These let us wish away,
 And turn, sole-thoughted, to one Lady there,
 Whose heart had brooded, all that wintry day,
 On love, and winged St. Agnes' saintly care,
 As she had heard old dames full many times declare. 45

VI.

They told her how, upon St. Agnes' Eve,
 Young virgins might have visions of delight,
 And soft adorings from their loves receive
 Upon the honeyed middle of the night,

If ceremonies due they did aright ; 50
 As, supperless to bed they must retire,
 And couch supine their beauties, lily white ;
 Nor look behind, nor sideways, but require
 Of Heaven with upward eyes for all that they desire.

VII.

Full of this whim was thoughtful Madeline : 55
~~The music, yearning like a God in pain,~~
 She scarcely heard : her maiden eyes divine,
 Fix'd on the floor, saw many a sweeping train
 Pass by — she heeded not at all : in vain
 Came many a tiptoe, amorous cavalier, 60
 And back retir'd ; not cool'd by high disdain,
 But she saw not : her heart was elsewhere :
 She sigh'd for Agnes' dreams, the sweetest of the year.

VIII.

She danc'd along with vague, regardless eyes,
 Anxious her lips, her breathing quick and short : 65
 The hallowed hour was near at hand : she sighs
 Amid the timbrels, and the thronged resort
 Of whisperers in anger, or in sport ;
 'Mid looks of love, defiance, hate, and scorn,
 Hoodwink'd with fairy fancy ; all amort, 70
 Save to St. Agnes and her lambs unshorn,
 And all the bliss to be before tomorrow morn.

IX.

So, purposing each moment to retire,
 She linger'd still. Meantime, across the moors,
 Had come young Porphyro, with heart on fire 75
 For Madeline. Beside the portal doors,
 Buttress'd from moonlight, stands he, and implores

All saints to give him sight of Madeline,
 But for one moment in the tedious hours,
 That he might gaze and worship all unseen ; 80
 Perchance speak, kneel, touch, kiss — in sooth such things
 have been.

x.

He ventures in : let no buzzed whisper tell :
 All eyes be muffled, or a hundred swords
 Will storm his heart, Love's fev'rous citadel :
 For him, those chambers held barbarian hordes, 85
 Hyena foemen, and hot-blooded lords,
 Whose very dogs would execrations howl
 Against his lineage : not one breast affords
 Him any mercy, in that mansion foul,
 Save one old beldame, weak in body and in soul. 90

xi.

Ah, happy chance ! the aged creature came,
 Shuffling along with ivory-headed wand,
 To where he stood, hid from the torch's flame,
 Behind a broad hall-pillar, far beyond
 The sound of merriment and chorus bland : 95
 He startled her ; but soon she knew his face,
 And grasp'd his fingers in her palsied hand,
 Saying, "Mercy, Porphyro ! hie thee from this place ;
 They are all here to-night, the whole blood-thirsty race !

xii.

"Get hence ! get hence ! there's dwarfish Hildebrand ; 100
 He had a fever late, and in the fit
 He cursed thee and thine, both house and land :
 Then there's that old Lord Maurice, not a whit
 More tame for his gray hairs — Alas me ! flit !

Flit like a ghost away." — " Ah, Gossip dear, 105
 We 're safe enough ; here in this armchair sit,
 And tell me how " — " Good Saints ! not here, not here ;
 Follow me, child, or else these stones will be thy bier."

XIII.

He follow'd through a lowly arched way,
 Brushing the cobwebs with his lofty plume ; 110
 And as she mutter'd " Well-a — well-a-day ! "
 He found him in a little moonlight room,
 Pale, lattic'd, chill, and silent as a tomb.
 " Now tell me where is Madeline," said he,
 " O tell me, Angela, by the holy loom 115
 Which none but secret sisterhood may see,
 When they St. Agnes' wool are weaving piously."

XIV.

" St. Agnes ! Ah ! it is St. Agnes' Eve —
 Yet men will murder upon holy days :
 Thou must hold water in a witch's sieve, 120
 And be liege-lord of all the Elves and Fays,
 To venture so: it fills me with amaze
 To see thee, Porphyro ! — St. Agnes' Eve !
 God's help ! my lady fair the conjuror plays
 This very night : good angels her deceive ! 125
 But let me laugh awhile, I've mickle time to grieve."

XV.

Feebly she laugheth in the languid moon,
 While Porphyro upon her face doth look,
 Like puzzled urchin on an aged crone
 Who keepeth clos'd a wond'rous riddle-book, 130
 As spectacl'd she sits in chimney nook.
 But soon his eyes grew brilliant, when she told

His lady's purpose ; and he scarce could brook
 Tears, at the thought of those enchantments cold,
 And Madeline asleep in lap of legends old. 135

XVI.

Sudden a thought came like a full-blown rose,
 Flushing his brow, and in his pained heart
 Made purple riot : then doth he propose
 A stratagem, that makes the beldame start :
 " A cruel man and impious thou art : 140
 Sweet lady, let her pray, and sleep, and dream
 Alone with her good angels, far apart
 From wicked men like thee. Go, go ! — I deem
 Thou canst not surely be the same that thou didst seem."

XVII.

" I will not harm her, by all saints I swear," 145
 Quoth Porphyro : " O may I ne'er find grace
 When my weak voice shall whisper its last prayer,
 If one of her soft ringlets I displace,
 Or look with ruffian passion in her face :
 Good Angela, believe me by these tears ; 150
 Or I will, even in a moment's space,
 Awake, with horrid shout, my foemen's ears,
 And beard them, though they be more fang'd than wolves
 and bears."

XVIII.

" Ah ! why wilt thou affright a feeble soul ?
 A poor, weak, palsy-stricken, churchyard thing, — 155
 Whose passing-bell may ere the midnight toll ;
 Whose prayers for thee, each morn and evening,
 Were never miss'd." — Thus plaining, doth she bring
 A gentler speech from burning Porphyro ;

So woful, and of such deep sorrowing, 160
 That Angela gives promise she will do
 Whatever he shall wish, betide her weal or woe.

XIX.

Which was, to lead him, in close secrecy,
 Even to Madeline's chamber, and there hide
 Him in a closet, of such privacy 165
 That he might see her beauty unespied,
 And win perhaps that night a peerless bride,
 While legioned fairies pac'd the coverlet,
 And pale enchantment held her sleepy-eyed.
 Never on such a night have lovers met. 170
 Since Merlin paid his Demon all the monstrous debt.

XX.

"It shall be as thou wishest," said the dame:
 "All cates and dainties shall be stored there
 Quickly on this feast-night: by the tambour frame
 Her own lute thou wilt see: no time to spare. 175
 For I am slow and feeble, and scarce dare
 On such a catering trust my dizzy head.
 Wait here, my child, with patience; kneel in prayer
 The while. Ah! thou must needs the lady wed,
 Or may I never leave my grave among the dead." 180

XXI.

So saying, she hobbled off with busy fear.
 The lover's endless minutes slowly pass'd;
 The dame return'd, and whisper'd in his ear
 To follow her; with aged eyes aghast
 From fright of dim espial. Safe at last. 185
 Through many a dusky gallery, they gain
 The maiden's chamber, silken, hushed, and chaste;
 Where Porphyro took covert, pleas'd amain.
 His poor guide hurried back with agues in her brain.

XXII.

Her falt'ring hand upon the balustrade, 190
 Old Angela was feeling for the stair,
 When Madeline, St. Agnes' charmed maid,
 Rose, like a missioned spirit, unaware :
 With silver taper's light, and pious care,
 She turn'd, and down the aged gossip led 195
 To a safe level matting. Now prepare,
 Young Porphyro, for gazing on that bed :
 She comes, she comes again, like ring-dove fray'd and fled.

XXIII.

Out went the taper as she hurried in ;
 Its little smoke, in pallid moonshine, died : 200
 She closed the door, she panted, all akin
 To spirits of the air, and visions wide :
 No uttered syllable, or, woe betide !
 But to her heart, her heart was voluble,
 Paining with eloquence her balmy side ; 205
 As though a tongueless nightingale should swell
 Her throat in vain, and die, heart-stifled, in her dell.

XXIV.

A casement high and triple-arched there was,
 All garlanded with carven imag'ries
 Of fruits, and flowers, and bunches of knot-grass, 210
 And diamonded with panes of quaint device,
 Innumerable of stains and splendid dyes,
 As are the tiger-moth's deep-damasked wings :
 And in the midst, 'mong thousand heraldries,
 And twilight saints, and dim emblazonings, 215
 A shielded scutcheon blush'd with blood of queens and
 kings.

XXV.

Full on this casement shone the wintry moon,
 And threw warm gules on Madeline's fair breast,
 As down she knelt for heaven's grace and boon :
 Rose-bloom fell on her hands, together prest, 220
 And on her silver cross soft amethyst,
 And on her hair a glory, like a saint :
 She seem'd a splendid angel, newly drest,
 Save wings, for heaven : — Porphyro grew faint :
 She knelt, so pure a thing, so free from mortal taint. 225

XXVI.

Anon his heart revives : her vespers done,
 Of all its wreathed pearls her hair she frees ;
 Unclasps her warmed jewels one by one ;
 Loosens her fragrant bodice ; by degrees
 Her rich attire creeps rustling to her knees : 230
 Half-hidden, like a mermaid in sea-weed,
 Pensive awhile she dreams awake, and sees,
 In fancy, fair St. Agnes in her bed,
 But dares not look behind, or all the charm is fled.

XXVII.

Soon, trembling in her soft and chilly nest, 235
 In sort of wakeful swoon, perplex'd she lay,
 Until the poppi'd warmth of sleep oppress'd
 Her soothed limbs, and soul fatigued away ;
 Flown, like a thought, until the morrow-day ;
 Blissfully haven'd both from joy and pain ; 240
 Clasp'd like a missal where swart Paynims pray ;
 Blinded alike from sunshine and from rain,
 As though a rose should shut, and be a bud again.

XXVIII.

Stol'n to this paradise, and so entranced,
 Porphyro gazed upon her empty dress, 245
 And listen'd to her breathing, if it chanc'd
 To wake into a slumberous tenderness :
 Which when he heard, that minute did he bless,
 And breath'd himself : then from the closet crept,
Noiseless as fear in a wide wilderness, 250
 And over the hushed carpet, silent, stept,
 And 'tween the curtains peep'd, where, lo! — how fast
 she slept.

XXIX.

Then by the bedside, where the faded moon
 Made a dim, silver twilight, soft he set
 A table, and, half anguish'd, threw thereon 255
 A cloth of woven crimson, gold, and jet : —
 O for some drowsy Morphean amulet !
 The boisterous, midnight, festive clarion,
 The kettle-drum, and far-heard clarionet,
 Affray his ears, though but in dying tone : — 260
 The hall door shuts again, and all the noise is gone.

XXX.

And still she slept an azure-lidded sleep,
 In blanched linen, smooth, and lavender'd,
 While he from forth the closet brought a heap
Of candied apple, quince, and plum, and gourd ; 265
With jellies soother than the creamy curd,
And lucent syrups, tinct with cinnamon ;
Manna and dates, in argosy transferr'd
From Fez ; and spiced dainties, every one,
From silken Samarcand to cedared Lebanon. 270

XXXI.

These delicates he heap'd with glowing hand
 On golden dishes and in baskets bright
 Of wreathed silver : sumptuous they stand
 In the retired quiet of the night,
 Filling the chilly room with perfume light. — 275
 "And now, my love, my seraph fair, awake!
 Thou art my heaven, and I thine eremite :
 Open thine eyes, for meek St. Agnes' sake,
 Or I shall drowse beside thee. so my soul doth ache."

XXXII.

Thus whispering, his warm, unnerved arm 280
 Sank in her pillow. Shaded was her dream
 By the dusk curtains : — 't was a midnight charm
 Impossible to melt as iced stream.
 The lustrous salvers in the moonlight gleam ;
 Broad golden fringe upon the carpet lies : 285
 It seem'd he never, never could redeem
 From such a steadfast spell his lady's eyes ;
 So mus'd awhile, entoil'd in woofed phantasies.

XXXIII.

Awakening up, he took her hollow lute, —
 Tumultuous, — and, in chords that tenderest be, 290
 He play'd an ancient ditty, long since mute,
 In Provence call'd, " La belle dame sans merci,"
 Close to her ear touching the melody : —
 Wherewith disturb'd, she utter'd a soft moan :
 He ceased — she panted quick — and suddenly 295
 Her blue affrayed eyes wide open shone :
 Upon his knees he sank, pale as smooth-sculptured stone.

XXXIV.

Her eyes were open, but she still beheld,
 Now wide awake, the vision of her sleep :
 There was a painful change, that nigh expell'd 300
 The blisses of her dream so pure and deep,
 At which fair Madeline began to weep,
 And moan forth witless words with many a sigh ;
 While still her gaze on Porphyro would keep :
 Who knelt, with joined hands and piteous eye, 305
 Fearing to move or speak, she look'd so dreamingly.

XXXV.

"Ah, Porphyro!" said she, "but even now
 Thy voice was at sweet tremble in mine ear,
 Made tuneable with every sweetest vow ;
 And those sad eyes were spiritual and clear : 310
 How chang'd thou art ! how pallid, chill, and drear !
 Give me that voice again, my Porphyro,
 Those looks immortal, those complainings dear !
 Oh leave me not in this eternal woe,
 For if thou diest, my Love, I know not where to go." 315

XXXVI.

Beyond a mortal man impassion'd far
 At these voluptuous accents, he arose,
 Ethereal, flushed, and like a throbbing star
 Seen 'mid the sapphire heaven's deep repose ;
 Into her dream he melted, as the rose 320
 Blendeth its odour with the violet, —
 Solution sweet : meantime the frost-wind blows
 Like Love's alarum pattering the sharp sleet
 Against the window-panes ; St. Agnes' moon hath set.

XXXVII.

'T is dark : quick pattereth the flaw-blown sleet : 325
 " This is no dream, my bride, my Madeline !"
 'T is dark : the iced gusts still rave and beat :
 " No dream, alas ! alas ! and woe is mine !
 Porphyro will leave me here to fade and pine. —
 Cruel ! what traitor could thee hither bring ? 330
 I curse not, for my heart is lost in thine,
 Though thou forsakest a deceived thing ;—
 A dove forlorn and lost with sick unpruned wing."

XXXVIII.

" My Madeline ! sweet dreamer ! lovely bride !
 Say, may I be for aye thy vassal blest ? 335
 Thy beauty's shield, heart-shaped and vermeil dyed ?
 Ah, silver shrine, here will I take my rest
 After so many hours of toil and quest,
 A famished pilgrim, — sav'd by miracle.
 Though I have found, I will not rob thy nest 340
 Saving of thy sweet self ; if thou think'st well
 To trust, fair Madeline, to no rude infidel."

XXXIX.

" Hark ! 't is an elfin-storm from fairy land,
 Of haggard seeming, but a boon indeed :
 Arise — arise ! the morning is at hand ; — 345
 The bloated wassailers will never heed :—
 Let us away, my love, with happy speed ;
 There are no ears to hear, or eyes to see, —
 Drown'd all in Rhenish and the sleepy mead :
 Awake ! arise ! my love, and fearless be, 350
 For o'er the southern moors I have a home for thee."

XL.

She hurried at his words, beset with fears,
 For there were sleeping dragons all around,
 At glaring watch, perhaps, with ready spears —
 Down the wide stairs a darkling way they found. — 355
 In all the house was heard no human sound.
 A chain-drooped lamp was flickering by each door ;
 The arras, rich with horseman, hawk, and hound,
 Flutter'd in the besieging wind's uproar ;
 And the long carpets rose along the gusty floor. 360

XLI.

They glide, like phantoms, into the wide hall ;
 Like phantoms, to the iron porch, they glide ;
 Where lay the Porter, in uneasy sprawl,
 With a huge empty flagon by his side :
 The wakeful bloodhound rose, and shook his hide, 365
 But his sagacious eye an inmate owns :
 By one, and one, the bolts full easy slide : —
 The chains lie silent on the footworn stones ; —
 The key turns, and the door upon its hinges groans.

XLII.

And they are gone : ay, ages long ago 370
These lovers fled away into the storm.
 That night the Baron dreamt of many a woe,
 And all his warrior-guests, with shade and form
 Of witch, and demon, and large coffin-worm,
 Were long be-nightmar'd. Angela the old 375
 Died palsy-twitch'd, with meagre face deform ;
 The Beadsman, after thousand aves told,
 For aye unsought for slept among his ashes cold.

NOTES.



The great odes which I have set at the beginning of this volume seem to me to be the greatest monuments to the genius of Keats, although without them he must still be ranked among the great poets. In connection with them may be quoted the words of Matthew Arnold, since his quotation is from another unfinished ode. "Shakespearian work it is; not imitative, indeed, of Shakespeare, but Shakespearian, because its expression has that rounded perfection and felicity of loveliness of which Shakespeare is the great master. To show such work is to praise it. Let us now end by delighting ourselves with a fragment of it, too broken to find a place among the pieces which follow, but far too beautiful to be lost. It is a fragment of an ode for May-day. O might I, he cries to May, O might I

. thy smiles
Seek as they once were sought, in Grecian isles,
By bards who died content on pleasant sward,
Leaving great verse unto a little clan!
O, give me their old vigour, and unheard
Save of the quiet primrose, and the span
Of heaven, and few ears,
Rounded by thee, my song should die away,
Content as theirs,
Rich in the simple worship of a day!'"

1. **Ode to a Nightingale.** This was suggested, Lord Houghton says, by the song of a nightingale which built its nest in the spring of 1819 close to Wentworth Place. "Keats took great pleasure in her song, and one morning took his chair from the breakfast table to the grass plot under a plum tree, where he remained between two and three hours. He then reached the house with some scraps of paper in his hand which he soon put together in the form of this ode." It was written during the period of depression which followed the death of Keats's brother Tom.

1. 16. **Hippocrene.** A spring on Mt. Helicon, sacred to the Muses.

3 69. **Charmed, etc.** These two lines, with their richness of suggestion, their witchery of beguilement, their inexhaustible charm, would

alone have been sufficient to prove Keats a great poet. They have been often quoted, but it is impossible to make them hackneyed.

4. **Ode on a Grecian Urn.** Written also in the spring of 1819. There is a tradition that the urn which inspired this Ode was one still preserved in the garden of Holland House. The variation in the arrangement of the rhymes of the closing lines is curious, and has the appearance of a want of care in revision. Mr. Palgrave remarks: "Had the first and last stanzas been throughout equal to the second, third, and fourth, this Ode would have had few rivals in our, or any, literature."

6 49. **Beauty is truth, etc.** "Keats's assertion illustrates itself by injuring the otherwise perfect poem which contains it. So obtrusive a moral lessens the effect of the *Ode on a Grecian Urn*. In other words, the beauty of the poem would be truer without it. . . . Pedagogic formulas of truth do not convey its essence. . . . The soul of truth . . . is found in the relation of things to the universal, and its correct expression is beautiful and inspiring."—E. C. STEDMAN, *Nature of Poetry*.

6. **Ode to Psyche.** In April, 1819, Keats wrote to his brother George of this Ode: "[It] is the first and only one with which I have taken even moderate pains; I have, for the most part, dashed off my lines in a hurry; this one I have done leisurely; I think it reads the more richly for it, and it will I hope encourage me to write other things in even a more peaceable and healthy spirit."

6 11. Trembled blossoms. Shaken by the wind or by the brooklet below. A characteristic example of Keats's fondness for condensing into a single epithet a whole thought. Here the thought seems perhaps somewhat too remote.

6 14. **Budded Tyrian.** Budded in Tyrian purple.

7 54. **Far, far around.** Upon the couplet beginning thus Ruskin comments: "Keats (as is his way) puts nearly all that may be said of the pine into one verse, though they are only figurative pines of which he is speaking. I have come to that pass of admiration for him now, that I dare not read him, so discontented it makes me with my own work: but others must not leave unread, in considering the influence of trees upon the human soul, that marvelous *Ode to Psyche*."—*Modern Painters*; vi, 9.

10. **Fancy.** "I know no other poem which so closely rivals the richness and melody,—and that in this very difficult and rarely attempted metre,—of Milton's *Allegro* and *Penseroso*."—PALGRAVE.

13 81. **Ceres' daughter.** Proserpine, who was carried away to Hades by Pluto, the "God of Torment."

13. **Ode.** Written, according to Mr. Forman, on a blank page before Beaumont and Fletcher's tragi-comedy, *The Fair Maid of the Inn*, and referring to those authors rather than to poets in general.

16 16. **Gives the half.** — The idea seems to be that Echo, repeating the words of the traveler, gives the half of the speech which they have together. The passage is a flagrant example of a line forced for the sake of the rhyme.

17 34. **Gamelyn.** *The Tale of Gamelyn* is added by Urry to the list of Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*. It is supposed that the latter may have had the idea of using the story, which furnished later the theme of Lodge's *Rosalynde*, and so of Shakespeare's *As You Like It*. The version which exists in some manuscripts of the *Canterbury Tales* is now known not to be Chaucer's.

17 36. "**Grenè shaw.**" Green wood.

18. **I Stood Tip-toe.** Palgrave remarks: "This nameless Poem, to judge by its style and matter, may be safely placed amongst the latest-written pieces in the volume of 1817. . . . We may take it also as a fit preface to the work which his short life enabled him to give us: presenting, as it does, two of the leading colors or motives that appear throughout his poetry, — the passion for pure nature-painting, and the love of the Hellenic myths, treated, not as the Greeks themselves treated them, but with a lavish descriptiveness which belongs to the English Renaissance movement, as represented by the *Faerie Queene*, and with a strong tinge of the still more modern movement which is intelligibly summed up under the name Romantic. . . . Already the tale of *Endymion* had seized on the Poet's imagination." Leigh Hunt, in his review of the volume, observes that in this "and in the other largest poem [*Sleep and Poetry*] . . . Mr. Keats is seen to his best advantage, and displays all that fertile power of association and imagery which constitutes the abstract poetical faculty as distinguished from every other."

18 12. "A fancy," says Leigh Hunt, "founded, as all beautiful fancies are, on a strong sense of what really exists or occurs."

23 180. Echo pined away from unrequited love for Narcissus, while he wasted to death for love of his own reflection in a pool.

25 6. **Archimago.** The wizard in the first canto of Spenser's *Faerie Queene*.

27 61. **Libertas.** Keats's poetic name for Leigh Hunt.

27. **Calidore.** Leigh Hunt is authority for considering this a fragment of the poem to which was to have belonged the *Induction* printed before it. The *Induction* bears marks of being written at a

later time, but Keats was so rapid in his poetic growth that no great interval is necessarily to be inferred.

29 50. **Wild cat's eyes.** Country name for the speedwell, *Veronica Chamaedrys* (Lin.).

32. **Woman.** Palgrave says: "What union of manly sense and exquisite tenderness,—not without amusing boyish candor,—in these three sonnets, which, for chivalrous devotion and picturesqueness, I would class between the best of Dante and Petrarch." I am unable to share this admiration, for the poem seems to me boyish and hardly worth preservation, but I am willing to grant that the fault may be my own.

33 1. Calidore is in the *Faerie Queene* the type of courtesy, and was modeled on Sir Philip Sidney. Leander is he of Abydos, the lover of Hero.

34. **Sleep and Poetry.** The yeast which was working in the heart and mind of the young poet bubbles and froths throughout this poem, which is full of fine and significant touches, despite its unevenness and the crudity apparent throughout. From what is said and what is suggested it is possible to gather hints of what might have been the future course of his genius. The sensuous delight in beauty which is so strongly marked in all his earlier work had already begun to give way somewhat to the earnest sympathy with that mystery of life without which no poet is truly great. It is said to have been written in its first draft in the "library of Hunt's cottage," which is the "poet's house" of l. 354.

35 28. **Rumblings.** I am sorry to say that I suspect Keats of having been guilty of the pronunciation "rum-bel-lings."

39 162-229. "Both the strength and the weakness of this are typically characteristic of the time and of the man. The passage is likely to remain for posterity the central expression of the spirit of literary emancipation then militant and about to triumph in England. The two great elder captains of the revolution, Coleridge and Wordsworth, have both expounded their cause in prose, with much more maturity of thought and language; . . . but neither has left any enunciation of theory having power to thrill the ear and haunt the memory like the rhymes of this young untrained recruit in the cause of poetic liberty and the return to nature. It is easy, indeed, to pick these verses of Keats to shreds, if we choose to fix a prosaic attention on their faults. . . . But, controversy apart, if we have in us a touch of the instinct for the poetry of imagination and beauty, as distinct from that of taste and reason, . . . we cannot but feel that Keats touches truly

the root of the matter ; we cannot but admire the elastic life and variety of his verse, his fine spontaneous and effective turns of rhetoric, the ring and power of his appeal to the elements, and the glow of his delight in the achievements and promise of the new age " — SIDNEY COLVIN.

It seems to me that Mr. Colvin attributes too much to Keats. At the time the passage referred to was written, the young man had hardly begun to understand the theory of poetry, and was certainly not in a position to reason about it for himself save in a somewhat rudimentary fashion. He had up to this time done little more than to accept the doctrines of Leigh Hunt, while he had probably never read a page of Boileau ; and although the tendencies of his genius and the course of his studies certainly led him more and more fully to accept these doctrines, to declare that Keats in his first volume announced original poetic articles of faith would be to convey an impression essentially at variance with the facts of the case. He was by nature in sympathy with the Elizabethans and out of key with the Eighteenth Century poets, but beyond that he was in this passage doing little more than repeating what was the poetic faith of Hunt.

39 173. The Elizabethan poets.

39 181. Here Keats pays his respects to the Eighteenth Century poets, with whom, as led by Pope, he had no sympathy whatever. Boileau (1636-1711) was the noted French poet and critic, upon whose *L'Art Poétique* were founded the theories which shaped the classical literature of France and those of Pope and his followers.

40 198. Gen. xxx. 37-39.

40 202. Apollo.

40 209. **Boundly** is an ugly word invented by Keats apparently to mean what one is bound to feel.

41 224-235. The conclusion of this passage is hopelessly obscure. The opening lines may be supposed to characterize certain of Keats's contemporaries, the swan being, perhaps, Wordsworth. The mention of the poets whom he has in mind suggests to him that some have chosen themes which he holds to be unfit for imaginative poetry, and in a way which he has not made clear he compares these themes to clubs in the grasp of Polyphemus when he strode into the sea in vain pursuit of Ulysses and his companion.

42 274. Apparently Keats made the pause after *retch* in this line and after *grand* in l. 333 do duty in place of an omitted syllable.

43 303. **Dædalian wings**. The allusion is to the wings which Dædalus made for himself and for his son Icarus, and which in the case of the latter were melted by a too near approach to the sun.

45 364. **Liny marble.** The comment of Palgrave, which seems to me a little 'precious,' is: "The epithet, if Keats here describes, not the veining, but the sharp, thin flutings and frieze-mouldings of a Greek temple, is singularly felicitous." The fact that the meaning is uncertain seems a sufficient reason for not considering the word felicitous here.

45 379. **Unshent.** The verb *shend* means to disgrace, to spoil, to put to shame, and *unshent* is used here in the sense of unspoiled. Keats probably took the word from Spenser.

46. **Stanzas.** This poem and those following as far as *La Belle Dame sans Merci*, were published posthumously. They belong, so far as is known, to 1818 and 1819.

48. **Teignmouth.** This piece I have retained chiefly on account of the glimpse of a side of Keats which is not generally known to those readers who are familiar with his poetry and not with his personal history. It has, too, graces of rhythm and of fresh out-of-door air which are richly worth preservation. Had it been carefully revised it might easily have held a not unhonored place among Keats's lesser lyrics. The poet was engaged in copying *Endymion* for the press at the time when these lines were written, in March, 1818; and was full of delight at getting out of doors again after a week of continuous rain which made him, he says, "give Devonshire a good blowing-up." **Dack'd haired.** Shock-headed. **Prickets** are two-year old deer. Of course in a poem seriously meant or carefully revised Keats would never have tolerated such a rhyme as 'critics — prickets.'

50. **Ode on Indolence.** This poem shows plainly the absence of revision, as in so careless a rhyme as 'grass — farce'; but it is not without the genuine Keats flavor. 'Placid sandals,' 'so hush a mask,' and 'sleep embroidered with dim dreams,' may be cited as among the markedly characteristic touches.

50 10. **Phidian lore.** A knowledge of the work of Phidias. The comparison is not happy when taken in connection with vases, and the line has an awkward air of having been made for the sake of a rhyme.

52. **Song.** I have spoken of this song in the *Introduction*. Dated 1818 in the *Literary Remains* (1848) in which it was first printed; it was more probably written in 1819.

53. **La Belle Dame sans Merci.** Published in *The Indicator*, May 10, 1820, with introduction by Leigh Hunt, in which the poem is said to have been suggested by "a translation, under this title, of a poem of the celebrated Alain Chartier, Secretary to Charles the Sixth and Seventh," formerly attributed to Chaucer. The suggestion was entirely in the name, as there is no resemblance between the old

lyric and Keats's poem. "The union of the imaginative and the real," Hunt remarks, "is very striking throughout, particularly in the dream. The wild gentleness of the rest of the thoughts and of the music are alike old; and they are alike young, for love and imagination are always young, let them bring with them what times and accompaniments they may. If we take real flesh and blood with us, we may throw ourselves, on the facile wings of our fancy, into what age we please." William M. Rossetti says: "This is a poem of impression. The impression is immediate, final, and permanent; and words would be more than wasted in pointing out to the reader that such and such are the details which have conduced to impress him." There is perhaps no other poem in modern literature which in so brief a space so completely and strongly produces an impression of penetrating weirdness. It is not to be called one of the three or four greatest poems of Keats, and yet in what it attempts there is hardly one of the poet's works which is more successful.

55. **On First Looking into Chapman's Homer.** Written in 1816. Charles Cowden Clarke and Keats had sat up together all night reading Chapman, 'Keats shouting with delight' at passages which particularly delighted him. They parted at daybreak, and at ten o'clock this sonnet was sent to Clarke. It has always deservedly been among the best loved of Keats's poems. W. M. Rossetti, *Life of Keats*, says: "Keats's first volume would present nothing worthy of permanent memory, were it not for his after achievements, and for the single sonnet upon Chapman's *Homer*." Of course Cortez is an error for Balboa, but the reader is too completely carried away by the image to be troubled by this. Leigh Hunt says of the last line: "We leave the reader standing upon it, with all the illimitable world of thought and feeling before him, to which his imagination will have been brought, while journeying through these 'realms of gold.'"

55 8. **Chapman, George;** 1559 (?)—1634. Poet and dramatist, friend of Jonson, Fletcher, and other poets of the time. Best known for translation of Homer, of which the first part was issued in 1598, the work being concluded in 1609. His version remains the most virile and genuinely poetic translation in the language, despite its numerous rivals.

56. **Dedication.** While the first volume of poems was being printed, [1817], writes C. C. Clarke, (*Recollections*), "on the evening when the last proof-sheet was brought from the printer, it was accompanied by the information that if 'a dedication to the book was intended it must be sent forthwith.' Whereupon he [Keats] withdrew to a side table, and in the buzz of a mixed conversation (for

there were several friends in the room) he composed . . . the Dedication Sonnet."

56. **Written on the Day, etc.** Feb. 3, 1815. A few days after Hunt's release Keats went to visit him. On his return he met C. C. Clarke, and turned to walk with him. When they parted, "he . . . gave me," says Clarke, "the sonnet . . . This I feel to be the first proof I had ever received of his having committed himself to verse; and how clearly do I recollect the conscious look and hesitation with which he offered it! There are some momentary glances by beloved friends that fade only with life."

57. Sonnets iv and v. These sonnets seem to me to be almost utterly without literary value, but it has been suggested that they should be included from their personal interest. Hunt spoke of the former as an example of Keats's "sense of the proper variety of versification without a due consideration of its principles. . . . By no contrivance of any sort can we prevent this from jumping out of the heroic measure into mere rhythmicity." This comment is equally true of the second, which, according to Clarke, was written on the occasion of Keats's first meeting with Hunt at the cottage in the Vale of Health, Hampstead.

58. **To G. A. W.** Miss Georgina Augusta Wylie, afterward wife of Keats's brother George.

58. **Solitude.** Keats's first published poem.

59. **Haydon**, Benjamin Robert, historical painter, 1786-1845. The men referred to in the first six lines are Wordsworth and Hunt; in the seventh, Haydon himself, who was overrated alike by himself and by his friends in a way which it is now difficult to understand.

60. **On the Grasshopper, etc.** Written at Hunt's cottage in friendly competition with Hunt, whose sonnet was as follows:

"Green little vaulter in the sunny grass
Catching your heart up at the feel of June,
Sole voice that's heard amidst the lazy noon,
When ev'n the bees lag at the summoning brass;
And you, warm little housekeeper, who class
With those who think the candles come too soon,
Loving the fire, and with your tricksome tune
Nick the glad silent moments as they pass:
Oh, sweet and tiny cousins that belong
One to the fields, the other to the hearth,
Both have your sunshine; both though small are strong
At your clear hearts: and both were sent on earth
To sing in thoughtful ears this natural song, —
In doors and out, summer and winter, mirth."

61. **On the Floure and the Lefe.** The octet of this sonnet is unhappily inferior to the sestet. It should perhaps be added that Chaucer's authorship of *The Floure and the Lefe* is now discredited.

61. **On the Sea.** Keats wrote from the Isle of Wight in April, 1817, that he had been sleepless, and haunted by the line in King Lear: "Do you not hear the sea?" He added immediately this sonnet, which had evidently been written under this influence. "The Spell of Hecate," *i.e.*, the moon withdrawing the tide.

62. **On Homer.** This fine sonnet is dated 1818, but Dante Gabriel Rossetti held it to be earlier than the splendid sonnet on *Chafman's Homer*. Rossetti is quoted by Mr. Forman as saying that he not only thought

"There is a budding morrow in midnight"

Keats's finest single line, but one of the finest "in all poetry." The estimate was perhaps rather an enthusiastic expression of admiration than a serious literal criticism. **Giant ignorance** in the first line doubtless refers to Keats's ignorance of Greek.

63. **When I have fears.** This sonnet was written in 1818, after the completion of *Endymion*. The feeling which it expresses is pathetic and profoundly human, and Palgrave speaks of it as a "fine sonnet." Personally I have never been able to reconcile myself to the conclusion, which seems to me inadequate.

63. **Bright Star.** Lord Houghton writes that after Keats had set out on his last dreary voyage for Italy, and the vessel had for a fortnight been beating about the Channel, he landed for a day on the Dorsetshire coast. "The bright beauty of the day and the scene revived the poet's drooping heart, and the inspiration remained with him for some time even after his return to the ship. It was then that he composed that sonnet of solemn tenderness. . . . I know of nothing written afterwards."

65. **Endymion** was begun in April, 1817, probably at Carisbrooke, and finished in first draft on the 28th of November following. The preface, which, whatever may be thought of it now, was certainly an unfortunate one at the time of its publication, is the second which Keats wrote. The first was objected to by his friends as too unconciliatory, and this is perhaps equally unsatisfactory from its too deprecatory tone. "I have not the slightest feeling of humility toward the public," he wrote in reply to a remonstrance against the defiant tone of the first preface, "or to anything in existence but the Eternal Being, the principle of Beauty, and the memory of great men. . . . A preface is written to

the public—a thing I cannot help looking upon as an enemy, and which I cannot address without feelings of hostility. . . . I never wrote one single line of poetry with the least shadow of public thought." This is youthful, and only remotely consistent with the frequently expressed desire of Keats to win undying fame; but it was undoubtedly sincere at the moment, and it throws a strong light upon the poet's wilful and intensely emotional character.

For a brief and striking criticism of the poem there is perhaps nothing better than what Shelley wrote: "Much praise is due to me for having read it, the author's intention appearing to be that no person should possibly get to the end of it. Yet it is full of some of the highest and the finest gleams of poetry; indeed, everything seems to be viewed by the mind of the poet which is described in it. I think if he had printed about fifty pages of fragments from it I should have been led to admire Keats as a poet more than I ought, of which there is now no danger."

William Michael Rossetti is also worth quoting here: "In snatches alluring, in entirety disheartening. . . . Affectations, conceits, and puerilities abound, both in thought and in diction; however willing to be pleased, the reader is often disconcerted and provoked. The number of clever things said cleverly, of rich things said richly, and of fine things finely, is, however, abundant and superabundant; and no one who peruses *Endymion* with the true sense of poetic endowment and handling can fail to see that it is peculiarly the work of a poet."

With the legends which relate the love of Diana for a shepherd, the story of the poem has little in common beyond the central idea. Keats employed only the framework of the Grecian story, and hardly that. Upon this framework he erected a romantic and essentially unclassic poem. Looked at coldly, *Endymion* is a work in which a young writer struggled with difficulties which he had not yet strength to conquer. Its narrative is confused and its course uncertain. Its intention has not the directness and continuity without which a poem cannot be ranked among the successes of literature. Examined with sympathy and appreciation it is found to be set thick with beauties which are imperishable because they are full of imagination, while even its faults are of the sort which are attractive because they spring from a temper nobly poetic however untrained, vitally imaginative though undeveloped and unformed.

67 1. I have not troubled the reader with the very numerous instances which have been preserved of the revisions, almost invariably improvements, to which Keats subjected his work. It may be of interest, however, to note that the familiar line which opens *Endymion*

a line which has become almost hackneyed by continual quotation, was originally in the form,

“ A thing of beauty is a constant joy.”

The verse revised is not at Keats's high-water mark, but it is most characteristic of his attitude toward life and is in itself pleasing.

71 144. The reference is to the nine years' servitude to King Admetus which was Apollo's punishment for killing the Cyclops who forged the bolt with which Æsculapius was killed.

71 150. **Begirt with minist'ring looks.** “ Surrounded by people whose looks showed their eagerness to do their ministering part ”
— FORMAN.

72 158. **Leda's love.** Jove won the love of Leda in the form of a swan.

73 208. The famous article in the *Quarterly Review* accused Keats of “ spawning ” uncouth words, and cited “ needments ” among others. The word was taken by the young poet from the *Faerie Queene*.

74 243. Syrinx escaped the importunities of Pan by being transformed into a reed. The myth is alluded to in *I Stood Tip-toe upon a Little Hill*.

77 334. **The raft branch.** *Raft*, meaning broken, was probably also borrowed from Spenser. In l. 335 a pause after branch apparently did duty to the poet's ear for the missing syllable, — or rather the three long syllables with which the verse opens were considered equivalent to two short and two long. There is no difficulty in so reading the passage.

79 405. See the *Arabian Nights' Entertainment*.

79 411. There are nine unrhyming lines in *Endymion*, all of which probably resulted from changes made during the revision of the poem, where a passage carrying the rhyming word was struck out and another substituted which was in complete couplets.

82 499. **Delphic emphasis.** With something of the impassioned frenzy of the Delphic priestess inspired by the god.

82 510. **A Paphian dove.** A dove sent by Venus from Paphos, both bird and place being sacred to her.

83 555. **Ditamy.** This word is retained because Keats chose it, although where he found authority for substituting it for dittany is undiscovered.

85 614. **Gordianed up.** Made into a Gordian knot.

86 643. Apparently: ‘ where the north wind blows so strongly as to balance or overcome the rush of the meteor.’ The comparison is forced and awkward.

89 748-757. "This analysis of Sleep and Dream is worthy of Shakespeare, in Shakespeare's best manner." — PALGRAVE.

97 13. **Close.** Keats explained to a friend that the word is here used in the sense of embrace.

98 31. Hero of *Much Ado about Nothing*, and Imogen of *Cymbeline*. For Pastorella, see *Faerie Queene*. b. vi, c. ii.

98 34-38. In allusion to the ill success of the volume of poems. 1817.

98 60. **Pight** for pitched occurs both in Shakespeare and in Spenser.

102 197. After the flood in which Zeus destroyed mankind, Deucalion stood with his wife Pyrrha on Mt. Parnassus, watching the waters recede.

102 198. Orion, having been blinded by CEnopion, was told by Vulcan to seek the sun-god, and, proceeding to the east, had his sight restored by a beam.

103 230. **Antre**, a cavern. "Antres vast and deserts idle." — *Othello*, i. 3.

110 443. Ariadne, having been deserted by Theseus at Naxos, was found by the god Bacchus and became his love. "It was a peculiarly happy piece of poetic realism to translate Ariadne's relations with Bacchus into her becoming a vintager; and I presume this was Keats's own thought, as well as the idea immediately following, that the God of Orchards conciliated Love with a gift of pears when paying his addresses to Pomona." — FORMAN.

Keats gathered his mythology from dictionaries instead of from Grecian poetry, and it therefore did not jar upon his sense of propriety to introduce here the names of Vertumnus and Pomona, which belong to Roman rather than to Grecian myth.

112 506. This picture of the sleepy Cupids is charming, but it is an instance of the inability of the young poet to keep the key, as it is in the tone of the French Renaissance.

121 832. **And then the forest.** Shelley, in a letter sent to the editor of the *Quarterly Review*, pointed out three passages in *Endymion*. The one beginning with this line; one in book iii, line 112, "The rosy veils mantling the East"; and in book iii, line 193, one beginning, "Upon a weeded rock this old man sat." Critics have not generally, however, found these superior to numerous other passages.

123 876. At the command of Zeus, Hermes with his pipe lulled to sleep Argus, who was guarding Io, and afterward killed him.

125 936. Arethusa was a nymph of Diana who was changed by that goddess into a fountain to avoid the importunities of the river-god Alpheus. He tried to mingle his stream with that of the fount, and

Diana opened an abyss down which the fountain-nymph plunged to reappear in Sicily, still pursued by the god.

128 1. The pseudo-political effusion with which the third book opens is rather a reflection of the opinions of the Leigh Hunt circle than the spontaneous expression of Keats, who at heart was too fully absorbed in literature to feel deeply upon such subjects as these. The whole passage is out of place and prosaic, and the young poet hardly got into key again in the entire book. The reader is continually confused between the feeling that he is supposed to be in the sea and the notion that he must be out of it. Keats does not seem to have succeeded in realizing to himself exactly that Endymion was supposed to be walking on the bottom of the ocean and consequently in the water, and the device of clearing the waves away in the hall of Neptune only increases the confusion. Considerations of this sort may be in themselves trivial, but the fact that the impression on the mind of the reader is chaotic makes their effect important.

130 71. **Tellus.** The earth.

131 99. When the love of Proserpine brought Pluto to earth.

131 110. **Freshening beads.** Air bubbles beaten down from above. The use of *taste* in a figurative sense in one clause and a literal one in the next is unfortunate.

132 129. Not since the Saturnian age.

135 244. Enceladus and Briareus were both imprisoned beneath Ætna, and the allusion might be to either.

136 265. I do not know what this means. The figure of cutting Endymion up for bait is not a happy one, and perhaps was redeemed in the mind of Keats by the suggestion of some Oriental tale which for him the line contained.

139 364. **Æthon.** One of the horses of the sun, named in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*.

140 406. Either the Pillars of Hercules (the Strait of Gibraltar), or Mt. Ceta, where the hero 'ended his story' on his funeral pyre.

148 685. This is one of the conceits the use of which Keats almost entirely outgrew. The line is compared to Atlas bearing the world in that each verse bears off so great a load of misery.

154 865. **Venus.** The epithet 'ooze-born' applied to the goddess below, l. 893, is not a fortunate substitute for the 'foam-born' of classic song.

155 899. Glaucus, for whom Venus asks compassion, was the son of Nais, one of the Oceanides and a former love of Neptune.

156 923. The whole fable of Glaucus and the dead lovers is puerile

and dull, and the one thing in it which is perhaps most effective, the gossip speech of Venus, is more akin to *St. Bartholomew's Fair* than to the first two books of the present poem.

158 1000. Nereus wedded his sister Doris, by whom he had fifty daughters, the Nereides. Nereus had the gift of prophecy and was distinguished for wisdom; he is here called Ægean, as living chiefly in that sea.

160 10. This passage is somewhat obscure and rather labored. The 'eastern voice' is that of the muse of Hebrew literature; then the muses of Grecian song call to the muse of England, sitting secluded 'in northern grot'; 'plain spoke fair Ausonia' may be supposed to refer to Roman literature; and 'a higher summons' to the Italian influence of Elizabethan time.

173 441. **He who died.** Icarus.

174 459. **Dædale.** Keats probably borrowed this word from Spenser:

"All were it Zeuxis or Praxiteles,
His dædale hand would faile and greatly faynt,
And her perfections with his error taynt." — *Faerie Queene*, Pro. to iii.

From *cunning*, *artful*, he seems to have deduced the meaning *inconstant*, or *deceptive*.

176 539. **Of health by due.** In the first draft Keats wrote: "The rightful tinge of health." It is evident then that *by due* is to be taken in the sense of *by right*.

178 606. Perseus, who rescued Andromeda from the sea-monster.

181 710. A most beautiful and no less characteristic line.

183 774. **Thy lute-voic'd brother.** An allusion to Hyperion, whose story the poet already had in mind.

189 950. **Seemlihed.** Another word from Spenser, meaning seemliness.

189 951. **Ha! I said.** Supply *I was*. See l. 937.

189 955. Prometheus was a thief in that he stole fire from heaven. He made man of clay in the image of the gods, and indued him with life.

190 1003. The reader is perhaps not without some share in the 'wonderment' with which Peona goes home. The fourth book of *Endymion* is in story even more futile than the third. The inconstancy of Endymion, the purposelessness of his flight through the air and the masquerading of his mistress in the shape of an Indian maiden, bewilder the reader and try his patience. The invention of the poet has not been equal to the task he set it, and the confusion of the

last two books is likely to make us forget that the plan of the first two is much better. The flight on magic horses, which is most unclassic, was probably for the sake of having the journey through earth and sea supplemented by a voyage through air. The fourth book, however, has not only an abundance of those beauties which mark the poem throughout, but it gives evidence of the rapidity of Keats's mental growth. *Hyperion* marks a great advance upon *Endymion*, but the careful reader will not fail to note that the steps toward that growth are plainly to be seen in such passages as ll 512-545; 670-721.

191. Hyperion. "I consider the fragment of *Hyperion*," Shelley wrote in the preface to *Adonais*, "as second to nothing that was ever produced by a writer of the same years." Elsewhere he says: "The great proportion of this piece is surely in the very highest style of poetry; . . . if the *Hyperion* be not grand poetry, none has been produced by our contemporaries." "The poem, if completed," notes Woodhouse, the friend of Keats, "would have treated of the dethronement of Hyperion, the former God of the Sun, by Apollo, — and incidentally of those of Oceanus by Neptune, of Saturn by Jupiter, etc., and of the war of the Giants for Saturn's reestablishment — with other events, of which we have but very dark hints in the mythological poets of Greece and Rome. In fact the incidents would have been pure creations of the Poet's brain." Keats abandoned the poem because, as he said, it contained "too many Miltonic inversions," and doubtless because, with his increased perception of his own powers and the conditions under which the poet of his day worked, he appreciated the impossibility of reviving the necessary interest in the subject. Byron declared that the "fragment of *Hyperion* seemed actually inspired by the Titans and as sublime as *Æschylus*"; and Swinburne has written discerningly: "The triumph of *Hyperion* is as nearly complete as the failure of *Endymion*. Yet Keats never gave such proof of a manly devotion and rational sense of duty to his art as in his resolution to leave this great poem unfinished; . . . on the solid and reasonable ground that a Miltonic study has something in its very scheme and nature too artificial, too studious of a foreign influence, to be carried on and carried out at such length as was implied by his original design." To the fragment in the volume of 1820 was prefixed this note:

"Advertisement. If any apology be thought necessary for the appearance of the unfinished poem of *Hyperion*, the publishers beg to state that they alone are responsible, as it was printed at their particular request, and contrary to the wish of the author. The poem was intended to have been of equal length with *Endymion*, but the reception given to that work discouraged the author from proceeding. Fleet-Street, June 26, 1820."

191 14. "It is impossible to over-estimate the value of such a landscape, so touched in with a few strokes of titanic meaning and completeness; and the whole sentiment of gigantic despair reflected around the fallen god of the Titan dynasty, and permeating the landscape, is resumed in the most perfect manner in the incident of the motionless fallen leaf, a line almost as intense and full of the essence of poetry as any line in our language."—FORMAN.

192 51. "Though we may well enough describe beings greater than ourselves by comparison, unfortunately we may not make them speak by comparison. . . . This grand confession of want of grandeur is all that he can do for them. Milton could do no more."—LEIGH HUNT.

194 113. **I have left, etc.** There is perhaps no idea in poetry since Shakespeare more Shakespearian than this.

195 134. A magnificent line, in which the repeated trochee is used with an effectiveness worthy a most finished master in the art of verse-making.

195 147. **The rebel three.** Zeus, Pluto and Neptune, the three sons of Saturn who had rebelled against him.

200 320. Saturn (Cronos) was the son of Coelus, the sky, and Tellus, the earth.

202 5. **Insulting light.** An imaginatively significant epithet.

202 17. **Stubborned with iron.** Made hard with a mingling of iron.

203 35. The use of 'Druid stones' is most happy, and the picture of some Stonehenge in the dismal dusk of a rain-dark November twilight is especially fine and suggestive.

203 61. This is perhaps the most inexcusable error in the entire range of Keats's work. It is worthy only of a schoolgirl, and that it escaped revision is as surprising as that it should ever have been written. Hope with an anchor (Hebrews, vi, 19) among the early gods is as perfect an example of the incongruous as exists in literature.

204 76. **Sobbed Clymene, etc.** A beautiful line, which without violating the proprieties of the supernatural scene gives a penetrating human pathos to it.

207 173. **O ye, whom wrath, etc.** This whole speech of Oceanus is of a dignity so fine and a reach so wide as almost to make the reader feel that after all Keats was in error in abandoning the design of completing *Hyperion*.

208 203. **To bear, etc.** This is one of the splendid generalizations which show the amazing growth of the mind of the youthful poet.

208 229. **That first in beauty, etc.** Here is found the development

of that worship of beauty which was the foundation of the poetic creed of Keats.

210 279. **And a wave filled it.** The image is exquisite.

219. "**Lamia** leaves on my ear an echo like the delicate richness of Virgil's hexameter in the *Eclogues*; the note of his magical inner sweetness is, in some degree, reached with a different instrument."—PALGRAVE.

"**Lamia** leaves on the mental palate a rich flavor, if not an absolutely healthy one."—W. M. ROSSETTI.

Lamia was written in 1819, "after much study of Dryden's versification," according to Keats's friend, Charles Armitage Brown. The influence of Dryden is especially to be noted in the Alexandrines.

220 47. **Gordian shape.** Knotted. See 85 614.

220 58. **Ariadne's tiar.** The crown given by Bacchus to Ariadne became a constellation after her death.

221 60. "The admiration, pity and horror, to be excited by humanity in a brute shape, were never perhaps called upon by a greater mixture of beauty and deformity than in the picture of this creature. Our pity and suspicions are begged by the first word; the profuse and vital beauties with which she is covered seem proportioned to her misery and natural rights; and lest we should lose sight of them in this gorgeousness, the 'woman's mouth' fills us at once with shuddering and compassion."—LEIGH HUNT.

221 81. **The star of Lethe.** Hermes is so called in allusion to his office of leading souls to Tartarus.

223 131. **Printless verdure.** The god hovered so lightly that the grasses did not bend beneath him.

223 133. **Caducean charm.** Hermes touched her with the caduceus, his snake-twined wand.

225 198. **Unshent.** *Unharmed, undeflowered*; or perhaps *unchided* because she so well learned the lore taught in 'Cupid's college.'

228 320. **Adonian feast.** The festival in honor of the dead Adonis.

229 333. **Pyrrha's pebbles.** After the deluge Deucalion and Pyrrha repopled the earth by casting over their shoulders stones which became men. The allusion to Adam is an unfortunate anachronism. The same might be said of Fairies and Peris in l. 329. In mingling mythology and fairy lore Keats followed Spenser, but not with the success attained in the *Faerie Queene*.

239 231. In Haydon's *Autobiography* it is said that Keats and Lamb once agreed, at the house of Haydon, that Newton "had

destroyed all the poetry of the rainbow, by reducing it to the prismatic colors."

242. **Isabella**; 1818. The story is from Boccaccio. *Decamerone*, Giorn. iv, nov. 5.

245 95. **Theseus' spouse**. Ariadne, deserted at Naxos.

246 121-128. It would perhaps have been no misfortune had this stanza been lost.

247. st. xvii. The last four lines are not clear. The brothers are called **hawks of ship-mast forests** as taking advantage of trading vessels in ports; **quick cat's-paws, etc.**, evidently in the sense of way-laying any improvident spendthrift, although the traditional use of 'cat's-paw' does not justify this.

247 140. **Hot Egypt's pest**. The suggestion of the hot Sahara hardly saves from commonplaceness the idea of sand flung in the eyes.

249 209. **Murder'd man**. Leigh Hunt says that this "masterly anticipation of his end, conveyed in a single word, has been justly admired."

251 262. **Hinnom's vale**. The valley of Hinnom, called also Tophet and Gehenna, accursed as the scene of the worship of Moloch, and used as a symbol of hell.

253 322. **Atom darkness**. Perhaps this strange use of atom was suggested by the 'atom'd mists' of Drayton's *Elegies*. It is most intelligible on the supposition that Keats had in mind the idea of a misty and therefore atomized gloom.

256 393. **Perséan sword**. The sword of Perseus with which he slew Medusa.

256 412. **Cold serpent pipe**. This reference to the practical details of the stillroom is somewhat absurdly out of place.

257 432. **Leafits**. Apparently this diminutive was coined by Keats. It is used only in this passage.

257. st. iv, lxi. "The author's invocation to Melancholy, Music, Echo, Spirits in grief, and Melpomene, to condole the approaching death of Isabella, seems to me a *fadneur* hardly more appropriate than the money-bag's epigram upon the 'dewy rosary.' But the reader is probably tired of my qualifying clauses for the admiration with which he regards *The Pot of Basil*. He thinks it beautiful and pathetic — and so do I." — W. M. ROSSETTI.

The poem certainly has faults as conspicuous as *Endymion*, and in a sense less excusable from the fact that the whole seems more mature; but its beauties are of a riper sort, and the unity of impression — due in

part, no doubt, to the fact that the story was ready made to Keats's hand, places it much in advance of the earlier poem.

255 451. **Baälites of pelf.** Worshipping pelf as pagans worshipped Baal.

259 491. "The passage about the tone of her voice. — the poor lost-witted coaxing, — the 'chuckle,' . . . is as true and touching an instance of the effect of a happy familiar word, as any in all poetry." — LEIGH HUNT.

261. **The Eve of St. Mark.** "The chastest and choicest example of his maturing manner, and shows astonishingly real mediævalism for one not bred an artist." — D. G. ROSSETTI.

"The non-completion of *The Eve of St. Mark* is the greatest grievance of which the admirers of Keats have to complain." — W. M. ROSSETTI.

It was believed that if a person placed himself near a church porch in the dusk of St. Mark's eve, he would see go into the building those of the parish who would during the coming year be smitten with disease. Those who were to recover he would afterward see emerge. The shades of those who must die would not return. It is supposed that Bertha, well and in her love half-careless, was meant to see the shadow of her absent and perhaps ailing lover enter the minster, not to reappear. The choice of such a subject is pathetically probable in connection with the dying poet's keen realization of his own condition in relation to Miss Brawne. From l. 99 to l. 114 the attempt is of course to give an imitation of an old chronicle, a trick with which Keats was sufficiently familiar from his admiration of Chatterton. The completeness and harmony of the impression in this fragment are by no means the least of the wonders of Keats's poetry.

265. **The Eve of St. Agnes.** St. Agnes' Day is the twenty-first of January, and the Eve of St. Agnes would of course be on the twentieth. The superstition upon which this beautiful poem is founded is that if a maid will on this eve retire fasting, her destined husband will come and feast with her in her dreams. The poem was written in 1819, and the manuscript copies bear evidence of the most careful revision, always with increase of effect. Of the longer poems of Keats this is unquestionably the most completely satisfactory, and it glows with a rich and unfading beauty like some sumptuous magic tapestry wrought by Morgan le Fay and her maids or by the queens watching around the couch of the wounded Arthur in Avalon.

265 2. **The owl.** "Could he have selected an image more warm and comfortable in itself, and, therefore, better contradicted by the season?"

We feel the plump, feathery bird in his nook, shivering in spite of his natural household warmth."—LEIGH HUNT.

265 21. **Flattered to tears.** The 'golden tongue' of music awoke for a brief instant some thrill of bygone joys, flattering the old man with a delusive shadow of a dream that once again they might be possible; but the reaction described in the following lines comes almost simultaneously.

266 31. **Silver, snarling trumpets.** I have never been fully reconciled to the use of 'snarling,' the connotation of which has always troubled me a little. The combative, resentful, offensive sense which the word conveys is out of place here, and cannot have been intended unless it is meant to indicate the arrogance of the pomp of the Baron.

267 58. "I do not use *train* for *concourse of passers by*, but for *skirts* sweeping along the floor."—KEATS to TAYLOR.

267 60. **Tip-toe.** An exceedingly happy word for the expression of the frivolity and affection of the gallants who must infallibly awake the contempt of Madeline. By giving the reader to understand that the heroine was insensible to these flimsy fasciators the poet implies worth and manliness on the part of the lover who had been able to win her heart.

267 70. **Amort.** The word was borrowed from the Elizabethans. Perhaps the most familiar instance is in *Taming of the Shrew*, iv, 3: "What, sweeting, all amort?" The meaning, as clearly enough indicated by the derivation, is *deadened, spiritless, dazed*. Perhaps the most recent instance of the use of the term is in Browning's *Sordello*.

269 117. **St. Agnes' wool.** The allusion in st. viii to **lambs unshorn** and here to **St. Agnes' wool** is to the rite of offering on St. Agnes' day while the *Agnus* was chanted in the mass, two lambs, the wool of which was afterward dressed, spun, and woven by the nuns.

271 171. **Since Merlin, etc.** "The monstrous debt was his monstrous existence, which he owed to a demon and repaid when he died or disappeared through the working of one of his own spells by Viviane."—FORMAN. See Tennyson's *Vivian*.

272 199-217. These three stanzas would be sufficient to make the reputation of any writer as being at least a poet who shared the qualities of the highest masters of beauty of expression. It seems to me worth while to give here, despite its length, the note on st. xxiv from Harry Buxton Forman's exhaustive edition of Keats. "This sumptuous passage occupied the poet's care very considerably. The following opening stands cancelled in the manuscript :

A Casement tripple arch'd and diamonded
 With many colored glass fronted the moon
 In midst w[h]ereof a shi[c]lded scutcheon shed
 High blushing gules : she kneeled saintly down
 And inly prayed for grace and heavenly boon :
 The blood red gules fell on her silver cross
 And her white hands devout.

In line 3 of this, *of which* stands cancelled in favor of *whereof* : and line 4 originally began with *High blushing gules upon*. A second fresh start is —

There was a Casement tripple arch'd and high
 All garlanded with carven imagries
 Of fruits and flowers and sunny corn :

before this was rejected the third line was amended thus, —

Of fruits and flowers and sunny corn ears parch'd :

I presume Keats noticed that *corn* did not rhyme with *high*, and meant to transpose the first line thus, —

There was a casement high and tripple arch'd :

but there is no trace of this in the manuscript. In the stanza as finally written there is the following cancelled reading of lines 6, etc., —

As in the wing of evening tiger moths
 And in the midst 'mong many heraldries
 And dim twilight . . .

"Before the present tiger-moth line was arrived at, the epithet *rich* instead of *deep* was tried, and *deep-damasked* in the manuscript stands cancelled in favor of what, though barely legible, I believe to be *deep sunset*. Presumably Keats reverted to *deep-damasked* when revising the proofs ; and it is certainly the happiest expression imaginable. Of this supreme result of poetic labor Leigh Hunt says, "Could all the pomp and graces of aristocracy, with Titian's and Raphael's aid to boot, go beyond the rich religion of this picture, with its "twilight saints," and its 'scutcheons "blushing with the blood of queens"?"

I am not of those who feel it wise to fix the attention of the reader on processes of the literary workshop, but it is not amiss sometimes to have an idea of the care which even genius must use to reach its best results.

273 218. **Gules.** "How proper, as well as pretty, the heraldic term *gules*, considering the occasion. *Red* would not have been a fiftieth part as good." — LEIGH HUNT.

273 241. **Where swart Paynims pray.** "Clasped like a missal in a land of Pagans: that is to say, where Christian prayer-books must not be seen, and are, therefore, doubly cherished for the danger." — LEIGH HUNT.

274 250. Noiseless as fear in a wide wilderness. To me this is one of the numerous great lines in the poem. Without being able clearly to define how or why, the reader feels himself seized by the throat, as it were, with a sense of being alone in a wide, breathless desert, where nothing of evil is visible, but where some awful and almost supernatural stillness is thrillingly informed with a fear too supreme for expression or comprehension. The suggestiveness of the line is all but worthy of Shakespeare.

274 262. "It is, apparently, as a poetical contrast to the fasting which was generally accepted as the due method by which a maiden was to prepare herself for the Vision, that the gorgeous supper-picture of st. xxx was introduced. Keats, who was Leigh Hunt's guest at the time this volume appeared, read aloud the passage to Hunt, with manifest pleasure in his work: the sole instance I can recall where the poet — modest in proportion to his greatness — yielded even to so innocent an impulse of vanity." — PALGRAVE.

274 266. **Soother.** Smoother to the palate.

275 289-297. It was a pretty fancy thus to connect his own poem, *La Belle Dame sans Merci*, with a forgotten Provençal air.

278 360. **Carpets.** Of course an error, as carpets were not in use at the time indicated by the rest of the poem. Forman notes that in *The King's Tragedy* Dante Gabriel Rossetti avoids such an anachronism:

"The night-wind wailed round the empty room
And the rushes shook on the floor."

The point is, however, one of no great importance.

Leigh Hunt's closing words upon this poem may not inaptly close these notes: "Here endeth the young and divine poet, but not the delight and gratitude of his readers; for, as he sings elsewhere, —

A thing of beauty is a joy forever."

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